

WITHDRAWN

20 CENTURIES OF
GREAT PREACHING

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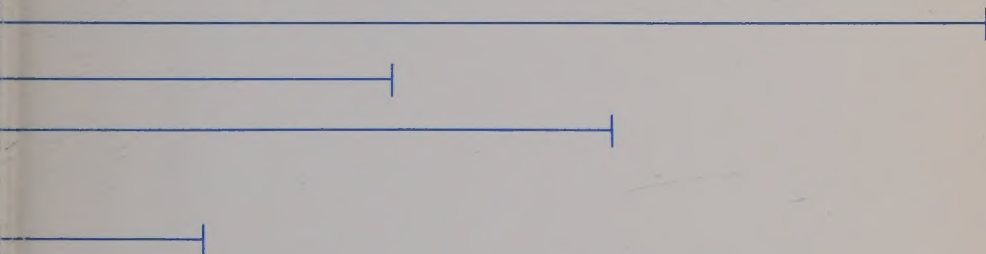


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	1940	1950	1960	1970
se to any	1940 – Churchill becomes prime minister of Britain	1950 – Korean War begins	1960 – Sit-ins begin in civil rights movement; Kennedy elected president	
	1941 – Pearl Harbor bombed by the Japanese		1961 – Berlin wall built	
nt	1942 – German drive in Russia halted	1952 – Eisenhower elected president	1962 – U.S.A. orbits man in space; Vatican II Council	
er- al	1943 – Fall of Mussolini in Italy	1953 – Stalin dies	1963 – President Kennedy assassinated; John- son becomes president	
	1944 – Allies invade Europe	1954 – U.S. Supreme Court decision on school desegregation	1964 – Passage of Civil Rights Act in U.S.A.	



War	1945 – Germany surrenders; atomic bombs dropped on Japan; Japan surrenders; UN organized	1955 – Einstein dies	1965 – Escalation of Vietnam War	
China		1956 – Nasser nationalizes Suez Canal		
		1957 – First satellite launched by Russia	1967 – First heart trans- plant	
	1948 – Berlin blockade; Israel established		1968 – Widespread racial violence in U.S.A.	
les War II	1949 – Communist victory in China		1969 – U.S.A. lands first man on moon	

20 CENTURIES OF
GREAT PREACHING

VOLUME NINE

FOSDICK

to

E. STANLEY JONES

1878-

20 CENTURIES OF GREAT PREACHING

An Encyclopedia of Preaching

VOLUME NINE

FOSDICK to E. STANLEY JONES

1878-

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FOSDICK TO E. STANLEY JONES

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Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible

<i>Old Testament</i>	<i>Authorized</i>	<i>Douay</i>
Genesis	Gen.	Gen.
Exodus	Exod.	Exod.
Leviticus	Lev.	Lev.
Numbers	Num.	Num.
Deuteronomy	Deut.	Deut.
Joshua	Josh.	Josue
Judges	Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth	Ruth
1 Samuel	1 Sam.	1 Kings
2 Samuel	2 Sam.	2 Kings
1 Kings	1 Kings	3 Kings
2 Kings	2 Kings	4 Kings
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.	1 Par.
2 Chronicles	2 Chron.	2 Par.
Ezra	Ezra	1 Esdras
Nehemiah	Neh.	2 Esdras
Esther	Esther	Esther
Job	Job	Job
Psalms	Ps.	Ps.
Proverbs	Prov.	Prov.
Ecclesiastes	Eccles.	Eccles.
Song of Solomon	Song of Sol.	Cant.
Isaiah	Isa.	Isa.
Jeremiah	Jer.	Jer.
Lamentations	Lam.	Lam.
Ezekiel	Ezek.	Ezech.
Daniel	Dan.	Dan.
Hosea	Hos.	Osee
Joel	Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad.	Abdias
Jonah	Jon.	Jon.
Micah	Mic.	Mich.

<i>Old Testament</i>	<i>Authorized</i>	<i>Douay</i>
Nahum	Nah.	Nah.
Habakkuk	Hab.	Hab.
Zephaniah	Zeph.	Soph.
Haggai	Hag.	Aggeus
Zechariah	Zech.	Zach.
Malachi	Mal.	Mal.

<i>New Testament</i>	<i>Authorized and Douay</i>	<i>New Testament</i>	<i>Authorized and Douay</i>
Matthew	Matt.	1 Timothy	1 Tim.
Mark	Mark	2 Timothy	2 Tim.
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Philemon	Philem.
Acts of the Apostles	Acts	Hebrews	Heb.
Romans	Rom.	James	James
1 Corinthians	1 Cor.	1 Peter	1 Pet.
2 Corinthians	2 Cor.	2 Peter	2 Pet.
Galatians	Gal.	1 John	1 John
Ephesians	Eph.	2 John	2 John
Philippians	Phil.	3 John	3 John
Colossians	Col.	Jude	Jude
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.	Revelation	Rev. (Apoc.)
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.		

ERV—the Revised Version of the Bible published in England in 1885.

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VOLUME NINE

FOSDICK

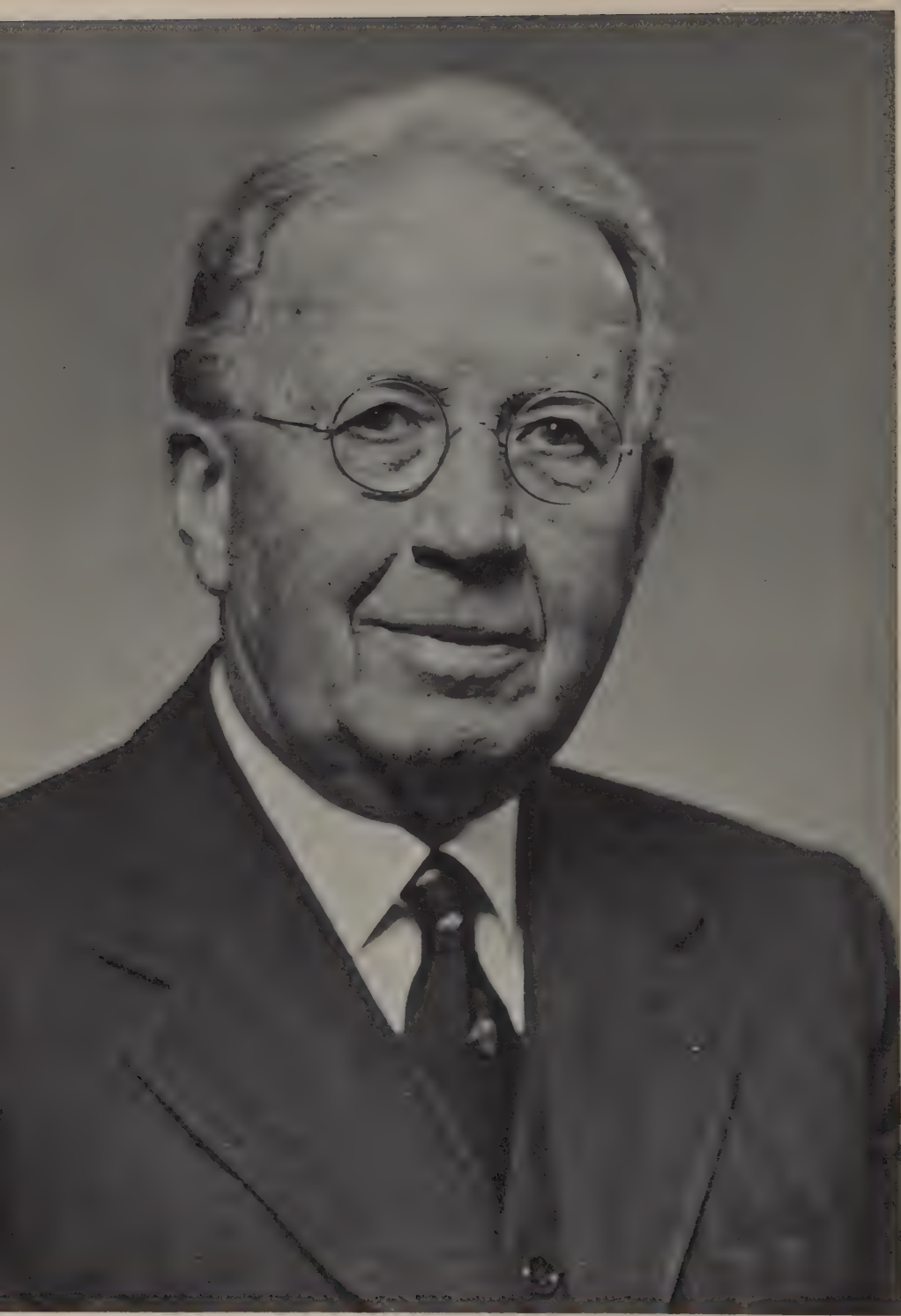
to

E. STANLEY JONES

1878-

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

1878-1969



HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK, photograph, courtesy of Harry Emerson Fosdick.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

- 1878 *Born at Buffalo, New York, May 24*
- 1900 *Entered divinity school, Colgate Seminary*
- 1901 *Moved to New York City to study in Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University; suffered nervous collapse*
- 1903 *Became associate minister of Madison Avenue Baptist Church, New York City, during senior year in seminary*
- 1904 *Married Florence Whitney and became pastor of the First Baptist Church, Montclair, New Jersey; served until 1915*
- 1908 *Became instructor in Baptist principles and polity, Union Theological Seminary*
- 1911 *Made an instructor in homiletics, Union Theological Seminary*
- 1915 *Became professor of practical theology, Union Theological Seminary; resigned Montclair pastorate*
- 1924 *Delivered Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale*
- 1926 *Assumed pastorate of Park Avenue Baptist Church, which became Riverside Church, New York City*
- 1946 *Retired from pastorate and professorship*
- 1969 *Died on October 5 in Bronxville, New York*

PASTOR OF JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, professor of Emil Brunner and Ralph Sockman, author of best sellers—he led no usual preacher's life. Attacked by fundamentalists and praised by liberals, he endured many theological storms. Born before the death of Queen Victoria, a man who never learned to drive an automobile came to symbolize modern preaching and theology. A Baptist who led a congregation made up of persons from

almost all denominations, he pioneered in practical ecumenicity. There has never been another preacher like Harry Emerson Fosdick.

LIFE AND TIMES

Fosdick was born in Buffalo, New York, on May 24, 1878. Both his father and mother were well-educated persons who treasured spiritual values more than material possessions. He entered a family with a record for nonconformity. His great-grandfather, a Baptist minister, had been defrocked because he refused to believe in hell. His parents were hardworking, sensitive people; both of them suffered breakdowns during Fosdick's youth.

Fosdick grew up in an era different from the one in which he was to serve. As a youth he lived in the twilight of the Victorian era. The lifetime of representative persons of that era—Gladstone, Disraeli, Tennyson, Browning, Ruskin, Carlyle—overlapped his boyhood. Fosdick was out of college before Queen Victoria died. He grew up in an America which was largely rural; the prairie schooners were still moving west. He visited Edison in his laboratory while the famous inventor was in the full swing of his work. The impact of science and agnosticism had a great molding effect upon Fosdick. Some of the leading names associated with these movements were alive in his youth. Charles Darwin died when he was four years old. Herbert Spencer visited the United States on a lecture tour in the same year of Darwin's death, 1882, and was greeted with wide acclaim. The tornado of revolt against the churches which Fosdick did so much to break up was already whirling through American life.

Books were important in his life as a youth; he read widely and devoured huge volumes at an early age. He was especially interested in works on religion. Fosdick was deeply sensitive and was disturbed by the hellfire preaching he heard as a boy. But the positive Christian influence of his family guided him toward early spiritual maturity. Of his family he wrote:

My family, deeply Christian, believed in the church and were always active in its service. Moreover, my parents' faith was so persuasively transmitted by contagion

rather than by coercion that I recall in my childhood no revolt against it, only a cordial acceptance and a sensitive response.¹

He was baptized on February 21, 1886, into the membership of the Baptist church in the village where he lived. Fosdick described his baptism:

It was my first significant, independent decision. My family was startled by it and more than a little reluctant about it. I recall my mother's anxious inquiries and protestations. At seven, how could I know what it meant to join the church? There is no use now trying to analyze the emotional basis of my decision, but it was clear and determined. There was no revival afoot to put pressure on me. . . . I intended to be a Christian. That was my business, I told my family, and not theirs to decide.²

His education was received at Colgate University, Colgate Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, and Columbia University. The most important aspect of his college and seminary training was his struggle to reconcile the findings of science with the statements of the Christian faith.

As a college student he harbored deep doubts about the Christian faith. A book by Andrew D. White, *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, finally smashed the idea of biblical inerrancy for Fosdick. Of this experience Fosdick says, "I no longer believed the old stuff I had been taught. Moreover, I no longer merely doubted it. I rose in indignant revolt against it."³ This was not his first encounter with doubt concerning biblical authority. Earlier, he came to conclude that it was no more necessary for him to believe in the Hebrew strongman, Samson, than in the Greek strongman, Hercules. As he put it, he felt no more compulsion to believe in "Hebrew folklore" than in "Greek folklore."

Fosdick did not want to toss aside his Christian faith; he wanted desperately to harmonize the findings of science with faith in Christ. He began a long and arduous struggle to achieve

1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Living of These Days* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), p. 19. Used by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

this harmony. A number of men were influential in his search, including William Newton Clarke, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Rufus Jones. Liberal theology finally was the chief influence which kept Fosdick within the church. Fosdick himself has written, "Liberal theology saved my Christian faith."⁴ He also wrote concerning William Newton Clarke, a professor who was a religious liberal, "Had it not been for him I suspect that I should never have been a Christian minister."⁵ Because of this experience, Fosdick had a lifetime affinity for liberal theology, an affinity which brought him many conflicts with fundamentalist ministers.

By his senior year in college Fosdick had determined to enter the ministry. Because of his love of fun, his open expression of religious doubt, and his seeming lack of piety, many classmates and professors were stunned by his intention to become a minister. After graduating from Colgate University, he entered Colgate Seminary for a year. Then he traveled to New York City and enrolled in Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. Meanwhile he became engaged to Florence Whitney.

In New York he had a scholarship and a job in mission work to the slum areas to care for his financial needs. He mastered his studies. Everything seemed to be working out well for him. Then suddenly his world tumbled in on him: he suffered a nervous collapse. After days and nights of sleepless tension he fled to his fiancée and then to his parents. An attempt at suicide was thwarted by his father and he was placed in a sanitarium for treatment. Four months later he was released—better, but by no means well. A six-week trip to Europe brought him closer to recovery and he resumed his work at Union. His return to normal living took two years, and even then scars remained. Finally, however, during his senior year at Union, he was able to serve as an associate minister of the Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York City.

Fosdick declared that this breakdown was one of the most significant factors in the molding of his life:

This whole horrid experience was one of the most important factors in my preparation for the ministry. For the first time in my life, I faced, at my wit's end, a situation too much for me to handle. I went down into

4. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

the depths where self-confidence becomes ludicrous. There the technique I had habitually relied upon — marshaling my wit and my volition and going strenuously after what I wanted — petered completely out. The harder I struggled, the worse I was. It was what I did the struggling with that was sick. I, who had thought myself strong, found myself beaten, unable to cope not only with outward circumstances but even with myself. In that experience I learned some things about religion that theological seminaries do not teach. I learned to pray, not because I had adequately argued out prayer's rationality, but because I desperately needed help from a Power greater than my own. I learned that God, much more than a theological proposition, is an immediately available Resource; that just as around our bodies is a physical universe from which we draw all our physical energy, so around our spirits is a spiritual Presence in living communion with whom we can find sustaining strength. Without that experience I do not think I would have written one of my early books, *The Meaning of Prayer*. And I learned as well much about human nature that academic courses in psychology leave out. . . .

This shift of center from a teaching to a preaching ministry began during my breakdown. That was an experience fit to shake a man out of any intellectual conceit he may have had and make him face up to human problems of another kind. One effect of it on me was to make me want to get at folks — ordinary, everyday folks — and try to help them.⁶

Fosdick's first full-time pastorate was the First Baptist Church of Montclair, New Jersey, where he served from 1904 until 1915. In 1908 he began his work as a teacher at Union Theological Seminary, New York City; from 1911 until 1915 he was an instructor in homiletics. In 1915 he became professor of practical theology, a post he held until his retirement. After leaving the church in Montclair, he preached in numerous churches, went on a preaching mission to the front in 1918 during World War I, and then became guest preacher at the old First Presbyterian Church in New York City. Here his liberal theology came in conflict with the more conservative theology of Clarence E. Macartney, a leading force in Presbyterianism. Finally after six years Fosdick relinquished his preaching post in the Presbyterian church.

6. Ibid., pp. 74–75, 78.

In 1924 Fosdick delivered the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale. He dealt exclusively with the use of the Bible in preaching. It was an opportunity for him to set forth his views concerning the interpretation of the Bible. The lecture-ship was attended by huge crowds. Police were required to restrain the people at the door to prevent injuries. The interest in these lectures was heightened because at the time Fosdick was engaged in a running battle with the fundamentalists.

In 1925 he agreed to become pastor of the Park Avenue Baptist Church, with the understanding that he could continue his teaching, and that the church would move to a new location and expand its ministry. As a result of this agreement John D. Rockefeller led in the erection of the twenty-two-story Riverside Church in New York. Fosdick assumed the pastorate of this church in 1926, although the building was not dedicated until 1931. He served there until his retirement in 1946. The Riverside Church was a unique experiment. Fosdick, a Baptist, insisted that members be received whether or not they had been immersed. The church was essentially nondenominational and maintained affiliation with numerous denominations. But Fosdick summarized the features which he felt to be important for a church in a sermon delivered before the new edifice was completed:

You know it could be wicked for us to have that new church—wicked! Whether it is going to be wicked or not depends on what we do with it. We must justify the possession of that magnificent equipment by the service that comes out of it. If we do not, it will be wicked. . . .

Very frequently in these days people come to me and say, The new church will be wonderful. My friends, it is not settled yet whether or not the new church will be wonderful. That depends on what we do with it. If we should gather a selfish company there, though the walls bulged every Sunday with the congregations, that would not be wonderful. If we formed there a religious club, greatly enjoying themselves, though we trebled our membership the first year; that would not be wonderful. . . .

If all over the world, at home and abroad, wherever the Kingdom of God is hard bestead, the support of this church should be felt and, like an incoming tide, many an estuary of human need should feel its contribution flowing in, that would be wonderful. If young men and

women coming to that church should have Isaiah's experience, seeing the Lord high and lifted up, his train filling the temple, and if they too should discover there their divine vocation – "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" – and should answer, "Here am I; send me," that would be wonderful. If, wherever soldiers of the common good are fighting for a more decent international life and a juster industry, they should feel behind them the support of this church which, though associated in the public thought with prosperity and power, has kept its conviction clear that a major part of Christianity is the application of the principles of Jesus to the social life, and that no industrial or international question is ever settled until it is settled Christianly, that would be wonderful. And if in this city, this glorious, wretched city, where so many live in houses that human beings ought not to live in, where children play upon streets that ought not to be the children's playground, where unemployment haunts families like the fear of hell, and two weeks in the country in the summertime is a paradise for a little child, if we could lift some burdens and lighten some dark spots and help to solve the problems of some communities, that would be wonderful. If in that new temple we simply sit together in heavenly places, that will not be wonderful, but if we also work together in unheavenly places, that will be.⁷

Fosdick's preaching at Riverside was exceedingly popular. Often the people would begin to line up hours before the service in order to insure getting a seat. By the time the services began often as many as four thousand persons had crowded into the building to hear Fosdick.

It is hard to imagine that Fosdick first found preaching extremely difficult, or that later, as a professor teaching homiletics at Union Seminary, he might envy his gifted students who found preaching easy. But such was the case:

Nevertheless, it was a struggle. Preaching for me has never been easy, and at the start it was often exceedingly painful. In later years I used to envy some of my students at the seminary who from the start seemed to know instinctively how to prepare a sermon and deliver it. Ralph Sockman, for example, in his first student

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 193-94.

sermon, exhibited such mature ability and skill that I told the class he acted as though he had had twenty years of experience behind him and I doubted whether even a homiletical professor could spoil him.⁸

The issue of liberalism versus fundamentalism tended to dominate the early ministry of Fosdick. The fundamentalists attacked Fosdick for his theology. Fosdick was especially subject to attack because he was such an influential pastor. Lesser lights could be ignored, but Fosdick must be countered, or, hopefully, silenced. Five chief issues were involved in the fundamentalist charges: Fosdick held wrong beliefs on the inerrant Bible, the virgin birth, the substitutionary atonement, the physical resurrection of Christ, and Christ's supernatural miracles. Concerning these days Fosdick has written, "Preaching Sunday after Sunday amid such angry denunciations was not easy. I did my best not to let the controversy dominate my ministry or make me forget what preaching was really meant to accomplish."⁹

Fosdick was not only concerned about theological questions; he also had a deep and abiding interest in social issues. His compassion for humanity would not let him rest in the face of social injustice and wrong. The issue that attracted his most intense interest was the question of war, perhaps because he had such a radical change of mind concerning the subject. Prior to World War I he had avidly defended war. Serving as a preacher to the troops in World War I, he saw the ravages and hurt of war firsthand. Then he had a change of mind and afterwards spoke strongly for the position of peace. Racial discrimination was also one of his major concerns. The struggle against the mistreatment of Negroes in particular was for him a lifelong concern.

Early in his ministry Fosdick was caught up in the effort to apply the Christian faith to the problems of economics. He felt deficient in understanding economics and enrolled in courses at Columbia University to correct that deficiency. He received an M.A. degree in 1908. His thesis was a firsthand study of the organized labor movement as it had developed in Montclair, New Jersey, the town in which he was pastoring.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

But he was not only a preacher concerned about social issues; on occasion he was also an activist. He made the acquaintance of the major labor leaders in the town, attended meetings of the locals, and helped found a social headquarters for union men. Here he hoped that a friendly intercourse might take place between the union and other members of the community.

A number of other social issues attracted his attention. He made a movie against Hitler in 1933. He preached against corrupt politics, particularly those in the New York City government; he spoke against miscarriages of justice in court decisions. He dealt with child labor and criticized it mercilessly. He was an enthusiastic supporter of women's suffrage. He upheld the concept of planned parenthood. He supported the practice of euthanasia in some instances. He worked with Alcoholics Anonymous, and he was deeply concerned about the alcoholic.

In his book on *The Royalty of the Pulpit*, a discussion of the preachers who delivered the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale, Edgar DeWitt Jones gave this tribute to Fosdick:

Already the name of Fosdick is being ranged along side the names of Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks on this side of the Atlantic, and with Frederick William Robertson on the other. Riverside Church, New York City, is destined to take its place in the history of preaching with Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Trinity Church, Boston, and Trinity Chapel, Brighton, England.¹⁰

In his later years Fosdick continued to preach, lecture, and write, until his declining health forced him into a wheelchair. Even then he carried on a voluminous correspondence with the greats and the unknowns of the Christian world. Many students in obscure corners of the nation who wrote to express gratitude for his ministry were startled to receive beautifully handwritten letters from Fosdick. In one such letter he wrote:

I am a very old man, and God has abundantly blessed my life. But I am tired now, and shall not be disappointed

10. Edgar DeWitt Jones, *The Royalty of the Pulpit* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1951), p. 107. Used by permission.

when that hour comes when the angels shall sound the trumpets for me, and I shall cross over to the other side.¹¹

Fosdick died on October 5, 1969, in Bronxville, New York. More than fifteen thousand attended his memorial service at Riverside Church, including Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy, general secretary of the National Council of Churches; John D. Rockefeller III, a leader at Riverside during its early years; the Rev. George Barry Ford, a Roman Catholic priest with whom Dr. Fosdick worked closely in ecumenical efforts; and a delegation from the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue. The memorial meditation was given by Dr. Robert J. McCracken, Fosdick's successor at Riverside. In it, he began by saying:

We have not come here today in heaviness of mind and spirit. If ever there was an occasion for celebration as well as commemoration this is certainly one. We give thanks to God for an outstandingly great spiritual leader, preacher, teacher, author, counsellor. He fought a good fight; he finished his course; he kept the faith. Having won "love, honor, troops of friends" he lived to be a nonagenarian. He had no fear of death. He felt his work was done. After he had taken his great-granddaughter into his arms he was ready to say his *Nunc Dimittis*. He was spared, as he prayed he might be, the long agony of suffering and helplessness through which some have to reach their hard-won goal. His soul is marching on.¹²

Referring to Fosdick's controversial life, McCracken said:

It has been charged that he adjusted the Gospel to his generation, tailored it to fit the times, trimmed as well as tailored it. He repudiated the charge and maintained that his sole purpose was to interpret the Gospel in terms intelligible to his hearers and readers and relevant to their needs.¹³

As McCracken drew near the end of his address, he summarized the faith of Fosdick with these words:

11. This letter was received by a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary student, who gave the author, Clyde E. Fant, Jr., a copy.

12. Robert J. McCracken, memorial address, supplied by Riverside Church, New York City.

13. *Ibid.*

The last time I saw him, he was confined to a chair. He told me that he had no bouts with depression, that he would welcome death, that when he went to the hospital to be operated on he rolled off all his responsibility and left it to the surgeon, and that likewise when the time came for him to die, the problem would not be his, but God's. "I completely trust Him," he said, and then, after a pause, he added, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."¹⁴

But perhaps the finest tribute of all came from the congregation of Riverside Church itself. In the October 17, 1969, edition of *Carillon*, weekly newsletter of the Riverside Church, these simple words captioned a photograph of Fosdick:

A grateful congregation remembers Harry Emerson Fosdick in a variety of ways. Some of us knew him personally: many recollections come to mind quickly. Others of us met him through his books, sermons, hymns and friends. As members of the church he founded, we perhaps know him better than most. What more can we say. He used his decades well. We thank God for his life among us.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

No other modern preacher has been studied as carefully as Harry Emerson Fosdick. He has been called "the father of modern preaching." His sermons have been studied, analyzed, and admired by conservatives and liberals alike; considering his liberal theology, the conservatives' interest in Fosdick is even more impressive. Countless articles have been written in homiletical journals on his preaching methods; his theology was once the subject of intense analysis in theological journals; modern students of the psychology of religion continue to write articles and even books on his method of counseling through preaching; and many a student in theology has earned his doctor's degree by writing a dissertation on some portion of his thought.

Fosdick was known during his ministry as the most widely heard preacher of his time; later analysts have called him the

14. Ibid.

preacher who has influenced the pattern of contemporary preaching more than any single individual. Many regard Fosdick as the greatest of all the modern preachers, and some even go so far as to claim that no other preacher of any century ever exceeded his preaching. He deserves all of the praise he has received. As extravagant as these compliments seem, it is hard to argue with them after reading Fosdick's sermons.

In his memorial message at the death of Fosdick, Robert McCracken described the sermonic genius of Fosdick and its influence on other preachers:

What a craftsman he was! He had a native inability to do anything badly. The versatility of the man! . . . Sixteen hours on average for the writing of a sermon, to say nothing of the long term preparation, and then, come Sunday morning, sermon after sermon a masterpiece, a tour de force—the vivid, vigorous style, “animated conversation” was how he described what he aimed at; the lucidity of the thought; the orderly sequence of the exposition culminating in the compelling conclusion; the skill, aptness, felicity of illustrations and quotations drawn from wide reading and from keen observation of everyday life and experience. He was at once the inspiration and despair of countless fellow-preachers, his sermons models of the preaching art, and how often more than models God alone knows. To read them was to be tempted sharply not merely to borrow but to plagiarize.¹⁵

What is there about his sermons that has excited so much attention? What accounts for his fame as a preacher? It is true that Fosdick stood in an important pulpit in a great city; it is also true that his ministry spanned an incredibly long period of time. But his fame cannot be so easily explained. It is also true that he became involved with many controversial issues which attracted widespread interest. But other men have done the same. Fosdick was a great pastor, one who wrote personal letters to the families of servicemen who visited his church during the war, and who consistently involved himself with the lives of his church members and the affairs of his city; yet other pastors have done the same.

Unlike some great preachers whose fame consists mainly in

15. Ibid.

their historical involvements or notable ministries, Fosdick's greatness rests squarely upon his preaching. He was virtually the perfect preacher; his sermons are practically flawless. His technical skills were incredible, but he had more than mere technique—he had the soul and spirit that alone distinguish great art from technical competence. The fame of other great preachers can be attributed to this or that quality about their preaching: one is a great biographical preacher; another paints with words; still another has flawless construction; someone else is a master illustrator. Some have profound thought but lack warmth; others have fire but lack originality. And Fosdick? One can find preaching experts who use Fosdick as an example of perfection in each of these virtues, and many more.

Has he never been criticized? Certainly he has been criticized—for his theology, for humanistic rationalism, for social preoccupation, for naïve optimism, and for other charges even less complimentary. He has been accused of not preaching the Bible, of dwelling on problems too exclusively, and of being preoccupied with man rather than with God. He has been called a heretic by at least as many people as have called him a great Christian.

Some of these charges are not worth considering, and others are half-truths. He was anything but “naïvely optimistic,” “a humanistic rationalist,” or a “heretic”—though there are always those broadminded souls who can include anyone in that category. It is true that Fosdick was not an orthodox thinker or denominationalist. It is true that he was largely concerned with man, but always man in his need; and he always found the answer to that need in the plan of God. His sermons do show an interest in social responsibility, but even more in personal faith. Though he does not begin every sermon with a text, the Scripture is very much involved in his preaching—profoundly so, in fact.

And when these objections are laid aside, the sermons of Fosdick remain as magnificent and inspiring examples of Christian preaching. Examine any particular about them—introduction, conclusion, illustrations, transitions, outline, style, imagery, or wording—or study the sermon as a whole: each one is a masterpiece of Christian preaching.

Fosdick explained his approach to preaching in a famous article in *Harper's* magazine, July, 1928, entitled “What's the Matter with Preaching?” The article was also published later as

a pamphlet by the Riverside Church. Halford Luccock suggested that the key to Fosdick's preaching was contained in one sentence from that article: "Start with a life issue, a real problem, personal or social, perplexing the mind or disturbing the conscience; face that problem fairly, deal with it honestly, and throw such light on it from the spirit of Christ, that people will be able to think more clearly and live more nobly because of that sermon."¹⁶ There are other statements that express Fosdick's philosophy of preaching — such as "Preaching is personal counseling on a group basis — nothing else"; "True preaching should be cooperative dialogue, not dogmatic monologue" — but none so thoroughly explains his philosophy of preaching.

Fosdick said of his experience with the life-situation method of preaching:

As I experimented with this approach, I found that within a paragraph or two after the sermon started first one listener and then another would discover that the preacher was bowling down his alley, and sometimes the whole congregation would grow tense and quiet, seeing that the sermon concerned a matter of vital import to every one of them. The preacher was handling a subject they were puzzled about, or a way of living they were dangerously experimenting with, or an experience which had bewildered them, or an ideal that they were striving for, or a need they had not known how to meet.¹⁷

But Fosdick should not be misrepresented, as he often has been, as a preacher who contented himself with morbid problem-probing, one lost in a world of frustrating human alternatives. To the contrary, it was precisely that kind of world which Fosdick urged his people to leave. He preached for a verdict; he believed in action:

The preacher's business is not merely to discuss repentance but to persuade people to repent; not merely to debate the meaning and possibility of Christian faith, but to produce Christian faith in the lives of his listeners; not merely to talk about the available power of God to bring victory over trouble and temptation, but to send

16. Halford E. Luccock, *In the Minister's Workshop* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1944), p. 51.

17. Fosdick, pp. 94-95.

people out from their worship on Sunday with the victory in their possession. A preacher's task is to create in his congregation the thing he is talking about.¹⁸

Various terms have been used to describe Fosdick's kind of preaching. Kemp calls it "topical," or "life-situation" preaching.¹⁹ Frank H. Caldwell refers to it as "problem-solving" preaching.²⁰ In his autobiography, *The Living of These Days*, Fosdick himself called it a "project method."²¹ Whatever the appropriate term, Fosdick's sermons begin by describing a human need, next illustrate that need from literature, from contemporary events and personal experiences, and then turn to the Bible for those principles which could meet that need.

Anyone who reads Fosdick's sermons must agree that he made extensive use of the Bible. His messages averaged about a dozen references to the Bible, both direct and indirect quotations.²² Although Fosdick has been greatly criticized for his views concerning the Bible, he was dedicated to its use in the sermon:

Any preacher who, with even moderate skill, is thus helping folk to solve their real problems is functioning. . . . This did not mean that the Bible's importance in preaching diminished. Upon the contrary, I have been suckled on the Bible, knew it and loved it, and I could not deal with any crucial problem in thought and life without seeing text after text lift up its hands begging to be used. The Bible came alive to me. . . .²³

Fosdick did rebel against the prevailing pattern of expository preaching common in his day. He did not believe that people come to church to hear the first half of a sermon spent on historical explanation and exposition: "Only the preacher proceeds

18. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

19. Charles F. Kemp, *Pastoral Preaching* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1963), p. 44.

20. Frank H. Caldwell, *Preaching Angles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), pp. 108-9.

21. Fosdick, p. 95.

22. Edmund Holt Linn, *Preaching as Counseling: The Unique Method of Harry Emerson Fosdick* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1966), p. 55. Used by permission.

23. Fosdick, p. 95.

still upon the idea that folk come to church desperately anxious to discover what happened to the Jebusites.”²⁴

On the other hand, he was not content with topical preaching. Fosdick felt that the work of most topical preachers was ineffectual and frustrating:

I watched those topical preachers with a dubious mind. Week after week turning their pulpits into platforms and their sermons into lectures, they strained after new intriguing subjects, and one knew that in private they were straining even more strenuously after new intriguing ideas about them. Instead of launching out from a great text they started with their own opinions on some matter of current interest often much farther away than a good Biblical text would be from the congregation's vital concerns and needs. . . .

Across the years since then I have seen those topical preachers petering out and leaving the ministry. If people do not come to church anxious about what happened to the Jebusites, neither do they come yearning to hear a lecturer express his personal opinion on themes which editors, columnists, and radio commentators have been dealing with throughout the week.²⁵

His frustration with both topical and expository preaching led Fosdick into his person-centered approach to preaching. He recognized that no homiletic method was without its dangers; specifically, he knew that some preachers had failed in a problem-solving approach because of a number of mistakes:

. . . they had been so practical in dealing with some definite problems that they had become trivial, failing to bring the eternal gospel to bear on the issue; or they had been so anxious to deal with felt needs in the congregation that they had forgotten still deeper needs, unfelt but real; or they had so limited the difficulties they preached about to private, psychological maladjustment that they became merely amateur pulpit psychiatrists, neglecting the public concerns of the Kingdom of God. These dangers are real, but such perversions are the fault of unskilled handling the like of which would wreck any method whatsoever.²⁶

24. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

Fosdick overcame the difficulties in this approach by blending his perceptive insights into human problems with the answers provided by the gospel of Christ:

A good sermon is an engineering operation by which a chasm is bridged so that spiritual goods on one side—the “unsearchable riches of Christ”—are actually transported into personal lives upon the other. . . . One is not merely making a speech about religion; one is dealing with the profoundest concerns of personality, with incalculable possibilities dependent on what is said that day. My silent prayer rose each Sunday before the sermon started: “O God, some one person here needs what I am going to say. Help me to reach him!”²⁷

Fosdick followed no set pattern in the use of his text. Occasionally he announced it at the beginning of his sermon, as in the sermon “The Great Hours of a Man’s Life.” When he did refer to a text, he made it a habit to give only the book and chapter reference; almost never did he mention the verse reference. In the sermon “The Power to See It Through,” his text was mentioned late in the introduction. Again, in “The Mystery of Life” he did not introduce his text until the body of the sermon had begun; in that sermon the text is stated at the end of his first point.

Fosdick’s sermons show an infinite variety of developmental patterns. Edmund Holt Linn, who has provided much invaluable material from his interviews with Fosdick, said of his sermon preparation:

Dr. Fosdick said that no two of his sermons developed in exactly the same way. Every one of them was different. When all went well, he did not build the structure; it emerged out of the thought material as though by spontaneous generation. Sometimes the entire organization fell into place with striking clarity; sometimes he saw at first only where to begin, with but a vague notion of the succeeding steps. To put the matter another way, sometimes he started with the big truth, sometimes with the beginning, sometimes with an illustration, and sometimes with the ending. Once in a great while he saw the whole sermon before he began to write.

Some sermons, therefore, were fully outlined before he started to write. On others, he began writing and felt

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

his way, stage by stage, until the structure became clear. He said that he was never able, as was Phillips Brooks, to write an entire sermon in a single morning.²⁸

Fosdick believed in carefully writing out his sermons. He pored over these manuscripts for long hours, spending days at a time gathering material and polishing and repolishing until the finished product emerged. Halford Luccock said that Fosdick's rewriting was not merely for the purpose of polishing phrases: "Quite the contrary—for the purpose of discovering where, if at all, an interest in words has subordinated an interest in people." He quotes Fosdick:

Uniformly I am through with my manuscript on Friday noon. The next stage is one of the most important of all, for, fearful that in working out my subject I may occasionally have forgotten my object, and may have got out of the center of focus the concrete personalities who will face me on Sunday, I sit down on Saturday morning and re-think the whole business as if my congregation were visibly before my eyes, often picking out individuals, and characteristic groups of individuals, and imaginatively trying my course of thought upon them, so as to be absolutely sure that I have not allowed any pride of discussion or lure of rhetoric to deflect me from my major purpose of doing something worthwhile with people. This process often means the elision of paragraphs that I liked very much when I first wrote them, and the rearrangement of order of thought in the interest of psychological persuasiveness.²⁹

With this specific objective in mind—to meet the needs of real people in his congregation—Fosdick attempted to present the central idea of his sermon early in the message. His sermons are notable for their immediate statement of the central theme. Fosdick had "one big truth" or thesis in his sermons, and this truth was closely related to the specific objective he hoped to achieve by the sermon. Around this central truth all of the other sermonic material was organized.

He believed in using simple, concrete words. His verbs, adjectives, and nouns were short and specific; his sentences were

28. Linn, p. 73.

29. Luccock, p. 68.

equally simple. Linn analyzed the sentences in the sermon "What Christians Have Done to Christ" and found that they ranged from two to eighty words in length, averaging twenty words. Another sermon, "Why Worship?" contained sentences ranging from eight to thirty words, averaging sixteen words to the sentence. In a selection from "The Unknown Soldier" containing forty-eight words, thirty-six of them have one syllable, eleven have two syllables, and one has three syllables:

You here this morning may listen to the rest of this sermon or not, as you please. It makes much less difference to me than usual what you do or think. I have an account to settle in this pulpit today between my soul and the Unknown Soldier.³⁰

Fosdick's successor at Riverside Church, Robert McCracken, documented the long hours Fosdick spent in the creation of such "simple" sermons:

For years now Dr. Fosdick has written every word of his sermon. He has labored long and arduously over the writing of them—polishing phrases, sentences, paragraphs; spending several mornings over one sermon; then taking the finished product with him into the pulpit, where because so much work has been done on it there is never any question of the diction to it or of reading it slavishly; it can be preached freely and vigorously with every indication of spontaneity.³¹

Fosdick's outlines were as simple as the words he chose for his sentences. For the most part his sermons contained three main divisions; yet some of them had only two, and others as many as seven. Linn surveyed one hundred eighty of his published sermons and found twenty-two two-point sermons, ninety three-point sermons, thirty-four four-point sermons, ten five-point sermons, three with six points, and two with seven points; nineteen were developed in a one-point style.³² Actually, Fosdick's sermons are much simpler than Linn's analysis would show. The sermons that Linn described as having five or more

30. Linn, p. 115.

31. Robert J. McCracken, *The Making of the Sermon* (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 67.

32. Linn, pp. 81–82.

points were invariably sermons that illustrated one or two *truths* in five or more areas of *application*; many times, Fosdick was actually preaching one-point sermons—or sermons in which only one principal idea is defined—and demonstrating the existence of that truth in numerous areas of human experience. When the actual truths, or separate idea-statements, in Fosdick's sermons are counted, very few of them indeed are found to contain more than three points.

Fosdick categorized his sermon forms as consisting of three types: the *box sermon*, the *tree sermon*, and the *river sermon*. The box sermon enumerated points one by one, as boards put on a box: his structure followed the traditional pattern, "First, . . . in the second place, . . . in the third place, . . ." The tree sermon was one in which the main points of the sermon developed out of the "big truth" as branches out of a tree. The river sermon moved along as one great theme with broad views, as a river sweeps along between its banks. The content of the sermon flowed along without sharp distinction as to the various points. Fosdick considered this form his best, although he used it least because of its difficulty.

Perhaps a look at some of Fosdick's sermon titles during one year will serve to illustrate his sermon themes and his ability with titles:³³

A Religion for the New Year
 Putting Manhood First
 Why Not Live the Good Life without Religion?
 On Not Being Able to Escape God
 On Having an Independent Character
 How Much Do We Want Democracy?
 On Being Adequate for Life
 When Each Man Cleans Up His Own Life
 An Appeal for Fellowship
 The Importance of Our Incidental Living
 The Cross Confronts Our Modern Mood (Palm Sunday)
 There Is No Death (Easter Sunday)
 The Spiritual Meanings of Play
 A New Kind of Epidemic (for boys and girls)
 On Finding It Hard to Believe in God
 Christian Attitudes in Social Reconstruction

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

Fosdick never failed to catch attention in the introduction to his sermons. He believed that every introduction should be characterized by six qualities as stated in these suggestions: begin with a real problem; begin by involving the listeners; begin by marking the urgency of the problem; begin with the Bible; state the big truth; state the nature and history of the problem.³⁴

In an interview at Riverside Church, Fosdick discussed the function of the beginning of the sermon:

Be like a mountain guide. Say, "There is Mt. Matterhorn." Then show them. Walk around the mountain two or three times making each view more impressive than the one before. Be sure that the progression becomes more dramatic as it moves along until at last, as though really seeing the mountain for the first time in all of its splendor, the sight-seer cries, "My God, Mt. Matterhorn!" Never hold back the major truth to the end. State the case. Then show them. Build surprises, climaxes, and suspense into the sermon, which grows as the theme develops. Make the first view slow and long; the second, less lengthy; and the third, the shortest of all.³⁵

Transitions are the important signposts of the sermon which link the major divisions of the message. Fosdick used transitions to relate the "big truth" to the main points, and the main points to the minor points. Transition sentences also appear in his sermons between the introduction and the body, and between the body and the conclusion. His transitions are marked by phrases which indicate an additional thought, such as, "Consider again," "Let us go further"; or show contrast, "over against," "on the other side"; or exemplification, "to be sure," "of course"; or alternation, "on the one hand," "not only"; or result, "the consequence is," "results are." For the most part Fosdick united the major sections of the sermons with transitional sentences, while his minor divisions were united by transitional phrases.³⁶

Fosdick was a master at illustrating his sermons. Most of his illustrations were short, but he averaged twelve to fifteen illus-

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-79.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

trations to the sermon. Literature was the major source for these illustrations. He was also fond of quotations. Linn has compiled a list, itself not comprehensive, of over two hundred eighty individuals from twenty-eight different fields of endeavor, from whom Fosdick quoted at least once. He used personal illustrations when they were pertinent. Often he described works of art or music. Nor was the world of culture or contemporary thought the limit of Fosdick's illustrations; many biblical illustrations fill his sermons. In fact, there is not a single kind of illustration, from hymn stanzas to imaginary discourse, that cannot be found in Fosdick's sermons. In illustrating, as in his style as a whole, Fosdick showed an incredible genius for variety.

Some writers have casually mentioned that Fosdick seldom used humor in his sermons, but if the sermons included in this selection are any fair example at all of his work, humor was used quite often. In his sermon "Christians in Spite of Everything," Fosdick said:

Two young sisters were disputing about which was the last book of the Bible and one was heard to exclaim to the other, "Barbara, I tell you the Bible does *not* end in Timothy; it ends in Revolutions."

The same sort of humor is displayed again in his famous sermon "Handling Life's Second-Bests":

Whistler, the artist, for example, started out to be a soldier and failed at West Point because he could not pass in chemistry. "If silicon had been a gas," he used to say, "I should have been a major-general."

The conclusions to Fosdick's sermons were brief and pointed. He concluded his sermons in one of four ways: he restated the "big truth," summarized the main points (a favorite method), appealed for acceptance of the message, or appealed for action. In all of these methods Fosdick is subtle but powerful in his concluding force.

He used three methods of delivery in his preaching ministry: memorization, extemporaneous speaking, and manuscript reading. He used the first method early in his first pastorate, but it took too much time; so he changed to extemporaneous preaching, by which he meant that he completely wrote out his

message and then spoke from a brief outline. He used this method for most of his ministry, but he finally changed to reading the sermon late in his career. Even then he continued to speak freely. Fosdick believed that a sermon should be delivered conversationally but with vigor and enthusiasm. He was never satisfied that he had completely mastered the conversational style. His voice contained more of a lilting cadence than he used in conversation, and his pitch was not as flexible.

Fosdick never thought that his voice was satisfactory. He spoke with more volume than normal, and his rate of delivery was not as varied as his normal conversation. Nevertheless, his voice was better than he thought; his pronunciation, articulation, and forcefulness overcame whatever other difficulties he had. There was a certain penetrating quality about Fosdick's voice that some described as harsh. Fosdick would have preferred more of a baritone voice than the tenor range he possessed, but his voice was not unpleasant. Occasionally he almost shouted, but he never whispered.

Fosdick seldom seemed hurried in his delivery: his rate of speaking was between 120 and 125 words a minute. Speaking before large audiences he spoke more slowly, a little more rapidly when speaking over the radio. He used pauses effectively. He rarely moved about while speaking. His gestures were few but effective. Occasionally he shifted his weight from one foot to the other unnoticeably, seemingly throwing the major part of his weight forward. His face was serious but not frozen, and occasionally he smiled. His gestures were natural; and he seldom, if ever, grasped the pulpit or leaned upon it. Occasionally he put his hands in his pockets in a relaxed stance.

Trying to select representative sermons from the magnificent collection of Harry Emerson Fosdick is a frustrating task. The sermons included, however, are among his best, although anyone might choose as many more sermons that would be equal to these, or, depending upon taste, even superior. At least these sermons do illustrate most of his strengths.

The sermon "Christians in Spite of Everything" may be easily described as one of Fosdick's finest. Notice his ability at imaginary discourse:

This is the high-sounding exhortation, telling us to be Christians in spite of everything, but, so far as millions of our population are concerned, it is nonsense. To be a Christian in spite of being born and reared in the depths

of some city slum, to be a Christian in spite of being a child in a share cropper's family with never a decent thing to civilize and elevate the soul, to be a Christian despite the fact that, like multitudes of young people, one finds it economically impossible to marry and found a home, or despite the insanity of nations periodically plunging their youth into the hell of war – what absurdity is this! . . . To all of this I should answer, That is handsomely said, but you have forgotten one thing. . . .

The same sermon shows his devotion to the church, one of Fosdick's favorite themes. His description of the *ecclesia* is one of the finest in Christian literature.

Fosdick's knack for stating the truth of the sermon in the opening sentence is well illustrated in "Handling Life's Second-Bests":

We are concerned today about a factual personal problem so nearly universal in its application that we need not be bothered by its exceptions: namely, that very few persons have a chance to live their lives on the basis of their first choice. We all have to live upon the basis of our second and third choices.

Fosdick used no less than sixteen illustrations in this one sermon. They are so carefully used, however, that one has to count them to believe there are so many. One of these illustrations reveals the unusual imagination of Fosdick as he described an imaginary letter from Paul:

If I had not missed Bithynia; if my plans had not been broken, if, if! I have given up everything for Jesus Christ. I could today be one of the great rabbis of Jerusalem saluted in the market place. . . .

He used the same technique in his marvelous sermon "Making the Best of a Bad Mess." This time his imaginary letter is from Titus to Paul:

"Dear Paul," I suspect he had said, "this is an awful place. The inhabitants are hopeless, and the poor, struggling Christian movement is only rags and tatters. I am remaining here until you say 'Go' but I can't get away

fast enough. For pity's sake, don't make me stay here all winter. There isn't a decent chance. Obediently but unhappily yours, Titus."

The sermon "The Power to See It Through" has been widely praised. The theme of that sermon as well as its three points are derived from three references to the life of Demas in Paul's letters: "Demas, my fellow worker; Demas; Demas forsook me." This phrase, which constitutes both thesis and outline, is repeated symphonically at least four times in the sermon.

"A Fundamentalist Sermon by a Modernist Preacher" reveals the theological attitudes of Fosdick and his sympathetic understanding of the better points in an opposing philosophy. If all of Fosdick's opponents could have profited as much from his point of view as he did from theirs, they would have benefited indeed.

Preachers will be learning from the masterful sermons of Fosdick for a long time to come: perhaps this selection will encourage a closer study of this contemporary preaching master.

Sermons

THE MODERN WORLD'S REDISCOVERY OF SIN

Matthew 1:21

AT THE VERY ENTRANCE of the Lenten season, dedicated to penitence and humility, we well may face the tragic fact that lies behind the New Testament's understanding of Christ, "Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." So, like the star of Bethlehem itself seen against the night, the very birth of Jesus is seen against the background of man's sin.

In this regard a clear contrast exists between the Christianity of our fathers and the liberal Christianity to which most of us have become accustomed. To our fathers sin was a horrid reality, a deep-seated depravity in human nature in which from birth we all shared and from which only the grace of God in Christ could save us. The old theology was centered in that conviction, the old hymnology expressed it, and the old pictures of hell made lurid the endless horror of sin's consequence.

Liberal Christianity, however, has on the whole been very complacent about human nature. Modernism grew up in an era when progress was in the air, with evolution as the process behind life and education as the means of liberating life. It was the time of fresh discoveries, idealistic hopes, alluring prospects, dominant optimism. So our liberal Christianity has everywhere been characterized by an ideal view of human nature. To be sure, there were failures to be outgrown, inadequacies to be overpassed, ignorance to be illumined, selfishness to be corrected, but no such tragic depravity at the heart of human nature as made Pascal call man "the glory and the scandal of the universe . . . a monster, even beyond apprehension."

Now, however, Lent comes again in a difficult year, with such cruel and depraved things afoot in the world as some of us have never seen before. I do not believe the old theology. I am glad many of the old

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hymns have dropped from the hymnal never to return. The old pictures of hell are to me an incredible anathema. But how can one be content with this soft, sentimental, complacent type of liberalism that thinks comfortably of human nature? It is said that a modern teacher wrote a whole book on religion's meaning, and when his friends called his attention to the fact that he had not even mentioned sin in it, he said: "Oh well, there ought not to be any such thing." Say what we will about our fathers' incredible ways of stating the matter, they were infinitely more realistic about the facts of human nature than such superficiality.

Today we and our hopes and all our efforts after goodness are up against a powerful antagonism, something demonic, tragic, terrific in human nature, that turns our loveliest qualities to evil and our finest endeavors into failure. Our fathers called that sin. If you have a better name for it, use it, but recognize the realistic fact.

Certainly, every path that man is traveling today leads to the rediscovery of sin. There is scientific inventiveness, for example. How full of hope for man's abundant life that once seemed! Here were gifts in endless affluence that he could use to build a better earth. But see to what tragic misuses they are put! What was it held up the democracies at Munich? I suppose ten thousand airplanes in Berlin, waiting to bomb London, so that, while diplomats talked in Munich, London was evacuating its little children as rapidly as it could. We blame our forefathers for even believing in infant damnation, but we, as it were, have taken over the job ourselves, using for our purposes the very gifts that were to have saved us. So a young man dying of tuberculosis, the result of poison gas in the World War, said, "I wish that our enemies had known less about chemistry or more about God." There is something demonic in human nature that can use the best for the worst.

Or consider education. A century ago, in Boston, Horace Mann believed that crime could be practically eliminated in this country by increase in the size and number of our tax-supported schools. Well, we have built tax-supported schools in size and number beyond anything that Horace Mann dreamed yet we are not through with crime. Indeed, add up all that we spend in America on education. That's an immense sum. Add to that all we spend for churches. That's another great sum. Add to that all we spend for charity. That is another large sum. Yet when we have added them all together, we are told that crime in this country costs us \$500 million more than them all. Moreover, into that crime goes every educated ingenuity from which education was to have saved us. There is something demonic in human nature that can pervert the best into the worst.

Or consider man's spiritual qualities: loyalty, responsiveness to great leadership, patriotism, the sense of community and fellowship. In themselves they are beautiful. Man has been saved from egocentric selfishness by his ennobling capacity to care for something other than

himself in race and nation. Yet look across the world and see what this incomprehensible monster, man, is doing with them! Recently a Christian Japanese woman called upon me. She was one of the most surprised persons I ever talked with. She had just come from Japan and for the first time was seeing what Japan is doing in China from an outside point of view. She told me what one sees inside Japan—the unifying and adoring loyalty to the Emperor, the kindling consciousness of solidarity and community, the sense of Japan's sacred mission in the Far East, the high crusade to save the Chinese people from their false rulers, the aged and kindly mothers who arise in the early morning, even in winter, to speed with their prayers the brave young fellows going to the front.

So all wars are fought and the most damnable things done on earth, whether in China or here, not by stark evil only but by the finest qualities in us, twisted to unholy uses by this demon that our fathers called sin.

Surely, our fathers were not shadow-boxing. We have mastered physical nature in ways they never dreamed, but we are still up against human nature. What to do about that? Physical nature is a realm of necessary law-abidingness, where we can trace cause and consequence and make ourselves masters of the outcome. But human nature presents us with something new and different—freedom, that high and terrible gift of freedom, that can take the holiest and make the worst out of it, and an inner wrongness that, so misusing freedom, brings to futility and grief the fairest hopes of men. I am sure that this view of human nature is the first step to a realistic outlook on what life is, and it can add the dimension of depth to our insights.

In the first place, it adds the dimension of depth to our thought of our social problems. All easygoing trust in social panaceas—as though, if we changed this circumstance a little here or altered that environment there, or took this short cut yonder, we would come to a happy social consequence—goes back to a radical failure to see that there is something wrong in human nature itself. If someone will not believe this because it sounds so much like the old theology, will you believe it if it is said to you in other terms by the new psychology? Early theologians called this inner depravity of human nature “original sin” and said we are all born with it. Freud calls it “the id” and he says we are born with it too. If you want to call this fact of primitive, selfish, and often perverted emotion that makes war on ourselves and the world, “id,” instead of “original sin,” by all means do so, but recognize the realistic fact: a racial inheritance—Freud is right about that—rolling down from generation to generation, ruining all the fair hopes of men, and in the end the source of these tragic disappointments when our fine schemes of social reformation are wrecked.

How easily some people have supposed that the human problem could be solved! In 1893 Hiram Maxim, speaking of his new and ter-

rible gun, said, "It will make war impossible." That is all he knew about human nature. In 1892 Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, said that his new dynamite factories might end war sooner than peace congresses. That is all he knew about human nature. This incomprehensible monster, man, has it in him to use for wholesale destructions things a thousand times worse than dynamite and Maxim guns.

Or carry our thought to a higher level. We tender-hearted liberal Christians, brought up in the humane tradition, deeply feeling the ills of the underprivileged, are constantly tempted to suppose that if only everybody were privileged that would solve the human problem. Now, I too hate these inequalities that curse our life. They are the shame of our civilization. I want decent housing for everyone, decent subsistence for all. No man worthy of the name can be content until we have a more equitable distribution of this world's goods. But as you hope to escape one of the most tragic disappointments in human history, do not suppose that that alone will solve the human problem. It is difficult to be a good Christian if you are underprivileged, but I ask you, Do you think it is necessarily easier to be a good Christian if you have all the world's goods? Does the fact that one can live on Fifth Avenue or Park Avenue or Riverside Drive necessarily mean the solution of those elemental problems of human nature that like God himself are no respecters of persons? If you think it does, then you do not know some people on Park Avenue, Fifth Avenue, and Riverside Drive.

We are going to run from one social disappointment into another until we see that behind all outward evils there is a need in human nature that only a profound spiritual renewal can cure. That is true not only of blind Bartimaeus begging by the roadside but of Zacchaeus in his counting house and Dives in his palace. That is true not only of a coarse woman of Samaria coming to draw water from the well; it is true of Nicodemus in his study, needing to be reborn again.

This recognition of the tragic fact about human nature, far from being the beginning of discouragement, is the beginning of hope. The man who is afraid to face it shows himself unprepared to confront the realistic facts. But the New Testament, which from beginning to end faces it, far from being discouraged, is the most radiant and triumphant book in the world. For the New Testament started with the tragic fact, "Even when we were dead through our trespasses." That's where it started. And then it saw that a saving power had been released into the world through Christ that could redeem individuals and move them over until they were no longer part of the problem but part of the answer, and then could take groups of people and move them over until on the whole they were no longer part of the problem but part of the answer. In that the New Testament saw the promise of a redeemed manhood. It started with the night and then it saw the star and was glad. That is the realistic way to approach life. As another

put it, "To expect a change in human nature may be an act of faith; but to expect a change in human society without it is an act of lunacy."

In the second place, this truth adds the dimension of depth to our thought of ourselves. No man understands himself until he has seen that he shares in this inner wrongness, from which he needs to be saved. Was it Oscar Wilde who told the story of a religious hermit, so holy a man that the evil spirits sent to tempt him were discouraged? They could not break him down. They tried the passions of the body and failed, the doubts of the mind, and failed again. Then Satan himself came and said to the evil spirits: "Your methods are crude. Permit me one moment." So, going to the holy hermit, Satan said: "Have you heard the good news? Your brother has been made Bishop of Alexandria." That got him. He, a poor hermit, and his brother Bishop of Alexandria! Jealousy swept over him like a flood. He could stand almost anything except the success of his brother. What we are saying is that no man understands himself until he has faced this kind of truth about himself.

In this regard we often deceive ourselves because sin can take such a high polish. Sometimes sin is gross and terrible. It staggers down the street; it blasphemes with oaths that can be heard; it wallows in vice unmentionable by modest lips. Then prosperity visits sin. It moves to a finer residence; it seeks the suburbs or gets itself domiciled on a college campus. It changes all its clothes. It is no longer indecent and obscene; its speech is mild; its civility is irreproachable. But at heart it is the same old sin, selfish, indulgent, hard, envious, cruel, unclean. As anybody may easily observe, sin takes on a very high polish.

The tragedy in all of this is that my sin is not simply mine individually but my share in the corporate evil that is destroying the hopes of the world. For selfishness, carnality, cruelty are not merely individual; they roll from generation to generation spoiling all man's hopes, and my curse is that I can be part of this major problem of the race instead of part of the answer. Indeed, by nature I am part of the problem unless I am saved from being that by some power of spiritual renewal. I beg of you, do not take this as though it were merely the kind of thing a preacher would say. All seers have said this. I will almost venture that every major work of literature in the world's history has been centered in this truth. Start with the great tragedies of Greece and think your way down through *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Faust*, *Les Misérables*, *Romola*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Anna Karenina*, what you will. The great seers have faced the centrality of sin in human life and our tragic capacity to be part of the corporate evil that spoils the world.

The recognition that this is true about man, far from being the beginning of discouragement, is the beginning of hope. This is what the New Testament is all about, trying to get man to take a serious view of himself and then seriously seek a cure for his malady. Go through

this highly respectable congregation here and who of us does not need this? For some here have sinned secretly and are afraid it will be found out publicly, and their lives are anxious, wondering if and when the ambush may be sprung. And some here have sinned and they cannot forgive themselves, and like a bell buoy tolled by the restless motion of uneasy waves, remorse is tolled by their tossing consciences. And some here have sinned and sin begins to grow habitual so that, as one plus one plus one adds up an accumulating sum, sin mounts and mounts in size and in control. And some here have sinned and have tried to keep the consequence to themselves and they cannot; it overflows and hurts their family and friends, as though once more the innocent were nailed to the cross because of them.

Every man or woman here understands what I am saying. This is not Greek to anyone. No one understands himself till he sees this. No one understands Christ's central meaning till he sees this. It would be keeping Lent indeed were we to take ourselves and his saviorhood thus seriously. As Clement of Alexandria said long ago about Christ: "He hath changed sunset into sunrise."

This leads us, in the third place, to note that our truth adds the dimension of depth not only to our thought of our social problems and ourselves but to our thought of Christianity and of Christ himself. Liberal Christianity in some of its forms has succeeded in reducing religion to little more than a kind of spiritual cosmetic, adding a touch of heightened color to a countenance not radically changed. For if one starts with a complacent view of human nature, religion inevitably becomes an addendum, comforting to some, reassuring to those who need it, but not an indispensable salvation. So men treat it as superfluous. If that is all Christianity is, I wonder why I have worked so hard these many years to make it seem persuasive. But if what we have said today is true, then Christianity has a dimension of depth to it. It is an indispensable salvation from that inner curse that is wrecking human hopes.

Why should moderns shrink so from the word salvation? What is scientific medicine? It is salvation, and when a man takes the measure of disease and what it does to men, sees it flowing across the generations bringing its recurrent miseries on humankind, he thanks God for the saving hope of surcease from pain and cure for malady that scientific medicine brings and will bring. Every major activity of man is concerned with salvation from human tragedy. The Christian gospel has a specialty as real as scientific medicine. It came to save men from that inner wrongness that curses human life.

I should suppose we would feel the need of that today. The human drama is not playing itself out well and no mere shifting of the scenery will fix the drama up. Something profound must happen to the actors if it is to come out right. Last Sunday two young men left this church after morning worship. My friend says he saw one of them put his

hand on the other's shoulder and heard him say: "The time is passed for high ideals only; it is Christ we need." If one sees the deep meanings in that, it is the truth. We need his radical remedy for our radical disease: one God, high over all, in loyalty to whom we are saved from our ruinous idolatries, one human family of every tribe and nation, in devotion to which we are saved from our destructive nationalisms and racialisms, and within ourselves the gospel of forgiveness and power—those two, forgiveness and power—by which, one by one, men and women are transferred from being part of the problem to being part of the solution.

The Lenten season comes again. Let us not be content with the formal observance of it. Saviorhood is the essence of Christ, and to face our deep needs in earnest, to repent sincerely and seek forgiveness and power, to take seriously him who for our sakes suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God—that would be keeping Lent.

Eternal Spirit, what we have talked about openly is of no value unless we face it inwardly. We pray Thee above all for that grace of honesty that will save us from our self-deception and give us courage to see ourselves in our need, and grace to see Thee in Thy saviorhood. Amen.

MAKING THE BEST OF A BAD MESS

Titus 1:5

LET us get at our subject through a letter which Paul once wrote to a young disciple of his named Titus. I shall take it for granted that Paul wrote this letter, although some scholars think that he did not. Paul, so the record runs, had left Titus upon the great island of Crete in the eastern Mediterranean, and the island of Crete was not at all a de-

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irable place for a Christian to be left. The situation is summarized in one blistering verse of this letter: "One of themselves," says Paul, "a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. This testimony is true." Such is Paul's summary of the situation in Crete and of the character of its inhabitants. But listen to him as he writes to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting."

That is a queer reason for leaving a man in Crete, that the Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, and idle gluttons. It sounds like a good reason for getting out of Crete. But Paul was a man of stern fiber. He himself never shrank, and he never wanted his followers to shrink, from the challenge of a difficult situation. He felt the stimulus of a hostile environment. There is something profoundly characteristic of the man himself and of Christianity at its best in that attitude. Crete—a hard place; the Cretans—a bad lot: "For this cause left I thee in Crete."

Put yourself in Titus's place as he received this letter. I surmise that it must have been a letter that Paul wrote to Titus in answer to one which he had received from him, and it ought not to be difficult to reconstruct the spirit in which Titus wrote. "Dear Paul," I suspect he had said, "this is an awful place. The inhabitants are hopeless, and the poor, struggling Christian movement is only rags and tatters. I am remaining here until you say 'Go' but I can't get away fast enough. For pity's sake, don't make me stay here all winter. There isn't a decent chance. Obediently but unhappily yours, Titus." And then he got this letter. "Titus," said Paul in effect, "you are right about the Cretans. They are liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. There isn't anything too bad that you can say about them. Crete is in deep need. For this cause left I thee in Crete."

Let us put ourselves in Titus's place. It ought not to be difficult. One way or another we are always getting into Crete. There are many differences that separate us here this morning, but any preacher could be sure of one thing which unites us: we all have been in Crete, we are all going to be in Crete, probably most of us are in Crete now. Moreover, we are human and complaining, and we want to get out of Crete. I wonder what Titus said to himself when he faced this ringing message, "For this cause left I thee in Crete."

In the first place, he must have reminded himself of some simple but profound common sense about life which he ought never to have forgotten. I think he said to himself, "Paul is right. After all, happiness is not something that you find. It is something that you create. And if you start with that attitude you might just as well create happiness in Crete as anywhere else."

When a man lands in Crete, you see, as probably Titus did, hoping to find it a pleasant place, he is foredoomed to disappointment. He walks up and down Crete looking for happiness, but it isn't to be found. The Cretans are a bad lot. Then he gets this message that changes his

inner attitude. He walks up and down Crete now, not looking for ready-made happiness, but looking for an opportunity. He has been left in Crete to use it as so much raw material out of which to make something. He is saying to himself over and over again, "Life is not something that you find; life is something that you create." And, lo! approached in that way, Crete becomes an El Dorado. That is not poetry; that is history. Crete did turn out to be one of the greatest opportunities that Christianity had in that ancient world. Today in Crete they are excavating the foundations of stately churches from which, in those early days when the gospel went out in the crusade against the paganism of the Roman Empire, came teachers, preachers, and missionaries of the cross. Whose name is on those churches? Titus's! Whose shrines were built there? Titus's! Saint Titus's! Think of it! In the very place from which once he could not soon enough get away! Paul was right. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting."

Surely, this principle runs through all of life. Life is not what you find; it is what you create. Many people wander into the world and pick up everything they can get their hands upon looking for life. They never get it. What they get is existence. Existence is what you *find*; life is what you *create*.

Biography is a running commentary on that. Who, for example, is this Scotch boy who landed in Boston a half century and more ago? He came over in the steerage when the steerage was a beastly place. His old Scotch father had told him that his abilities were below the average. He began his life in America as a foundryman and he roomed over a liquor saloon in the north end of Boston. Such was his existence to start with. What he made of it, however, was a great life. For he was George A. Gordon, one of the best scholars Harvard ever graduated, who in Old South Church, Boston, a few years ago celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his pastorate—one of the most notable for intellectual quality and spiritual influence in the annals of American churches—and who now has fallen on sleep, full of years and honor. His existence was what he found; his life was what he created.

One wonders if this ability to tackle life as Titus tackled Crete, without which America would lose nine-tenths of her glory, is going to be distinctive of the new generation. Many of our children are going to schools where, as Dean Hawkes of Columbia says, they are asked in the morning what, if anything, they wish to study that day. We are surrounding them in our families with luxuries that we never knew, that our fathers never dreamed. They are told on every side that personality is a creature of environment and that the great thing is for everybody to be surrounded by commodious and comfortable circumstances. I do not think that that is going to make them morally wild, but I am sure that it is deceiving many of them as to the real secret of living. They are expecting to find life, pick it up, get it out of circum-

stances, and that is a fallacy. You never find life; you create it. Often the best friend a man ever has is not comfort but the stimulus and challenge of antagonistic environment to awaken the resistance of his slumbering soul.

This principle, that all life has to be tackled as Titus tackled Crete, applies not simply to an elemental matter like character, but also to some of our dearest relationships. What is the matter with our sadly shaken married life in the United States? Many people say that the laws are wrong. The laws about divorce are very chaotic and should be greatly improved, but all the tinkering that we do with the laws will not solve the problem of our family life. The deeper trouble is that young people approaching marriage think of it merely as a road to happiness. They expect magically to alight on happiness in marriage. They expect some day to fall in love and float into bliss. The fact is, there is little about marriage in itself to make happiness, while there are plenty of things about marriage to make perdition. Two personalities wanting to be happy come into a relationship the most intimate that earth knows, where all the peculiarities of one are thrust at the sensitiveness of the other. That situation by itself is much more likely to make agony than bliss.

There is, however, one glorious thing about marriage. It is an opportunity, the most beautiful opportunity that life knows. It is an opportunity to create a friendship stronger than death. It is an opportunity for children, the loveliness of their companionship, and the social service rendered to the world by their fine upbringing. It is an opportunity to build a school for character which shall make it easier for all who see it to believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Take marriage as a spiritual opportunity, the raw material, with many hostile and difficult elements in it, out of which strong souls can build a great result, and you will have a real home. But you never will find one. Real homes are never found; they are spiritually created.

All life must be tackled as Titus tackled Crete. What existence hands us is raw material out of which something must be spiritually made. A man who faces life like that needs a soul undergirded by great faiths, overarched by high convictions, and blessed with inward power. As a man thinks of life in this way, he hears the echo of an old word, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

A second thing Titus must have said when he received Paul's letter. "Paul is right," I think he said. "This principle which he recommends is not only common sense; it is good Christianity." There is no use pretending to be a disciple of Jesus if we are unwilling to stay in Crete because it is difficult. Jesus belongs in Crete. Jesus particularly belongs in Crete. He belongs in Crete, not in spite of the fact that the Cretans are liars, beasts, gluttons, but because they are. "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," said his enemies. He was

always trying to discover Crete. "The publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him." He always attracted Crete to himself. There is no use pretending to be his disciples if we are dodging Crete!

Imagine the Master, if you can, in some discouraged hour when things were going badly with his ministry, saying, "O God, human beings are a cruel lot. They are selfish, sensual, hateful, brutish. Already I can see that what their fathers did to the prophets they are going to do to me. A crooked and perverse generation!" What voice would he have heard out of the unseen? "For this cause sent I thee into the world." You cannot imagine the Master going into any situation without making it his first business to look up Crete. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Ah, we respectable Christians! We have gone on building churches, elaborating complicated creeds, worshiping through splendid rituals, but how often the real spirit of Jesus has been somewhere else! Wherever in this modern world there is a Crete, where the situation is difficult and people needy, where for love's sake some soul puts itself alongside the need and lifts, there is the real spirit of Jesus, who "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich."

One cannot speak of this without thinking of some of our modern Tituses, whom one knows personally, who have really gone to Crete. I baptized one years ago. She has graduated from college since. She has had all that American culture and education can give her. She has married a young physician. This morning they are up the Congo in Central Africa. I suppose still the Cretans are liars, beasts, gluttons, but in that spot, where under the magic of unselfish service a better day is dawning, there is a challenge in the very degradation: For this cause sent I thee to Crete.

When a man does live in this spirit of Jesus, it is more satisfying than anything beside. Consider: the deepest joy in life is creativeness. To find an undeveloped situation, to see the possibilities, to brood over it, pray about it, think concerning it, work for it, to get something done there that would not have been done except for your creative soul—that is a satisfaction in comparison with which superficial joys are trivial.

This is true even when creativeness is turned toward things physical, like the conquest of the air. Some time ago one of our aviators, who carried mail from New York to Cleveland, fell in the mountains of Pennsylvania and was killed. They found upon his body a letter addressed "To My Beloved Brother Pilots and Pals" and marked "To be opened only after my death." Listen to what he said: "I go west, but with a cheerful heart. I hope what small sacrifice I have made may be of use to the cause. When we fly we are fools, they say. . . . But every

one in this wonderful aviation service is doing the world far more good than the public can appreciate. We risk our necks, we give our lives, we perfect a service for the benefit of the world at large. . . . But stick to it, boys. I'm still very much with you all. See you all again."

You pity that boy? I don't. He had more fun in his short life than all the satiated pleasure-seekers who habitually try to feed their souls on superficial foam. For the elemental joy is creativeness and when that spirit of creativeness is turned to spiritual ends and helps to transform personalities and societies it is so satisfying that I do not know whether it is selfish or unselfish. After Titus got started in Crete you could not have dragged him away.

The joy of every true preacher is not that he preaches to this number of people or that, but that once in a while he comes within reach of an individual soul upon whom he can exercise a creative influence. I am thinking today of a Christian home, one of the most promising Christian homes I know. Who is the wife? She was a chorus girl on Broadway. The current was too strong for her. She went under. She touched the bottom of the pit in this perilous city. You never would guess it now. Christ did in her a thing so beautiful that not only have the wounds been healed, but I do not know how you ever would find the scars. Columbus must have gotten deep satisfaction out of discovering America, but no more thrilling, I think, than to discover a soul in Crete and lead the way up. Don't dodge Crete. If in this city we have not found our Crete—the area of human need that belongs to us—then we are not quite Christians until we find it.

One other thing I think Titus said when Paul's letter came. I suspect he thought to himself: "Paul is right. The ultimate test of a man's faith in God is its power to see him through a hard place." Perhaps we have not been sympathetic enough with Titus. Crete was a hard place, so hard and the people so unlovely that I suspect moral indignation had a good deal to do with Titus's first attitude. It would have been such a relief to his sense of what was fitting to tell them what he thought of them—liars, beasts, gluttons—and then leave them so. How natural! Many of us here, I suspect, are tempted to deal with some situations which we face by that cheap and easy method of moral indignation. It is much easier to denounce than to build.

Consider the church, for example. Nothing is easier than to berate the church. Sectarian, obscurantist, belated, out of touch with the major movements of thought and life in our time—the churches do face the most perilous situation they have faced since the Protestant Reformation. Here is a chance for irresponsible critics to revel in denunciation, and they are taking full advantage of the opportunity. But they get us nowhere. The situation calls for another attitude altogether—for Tituses who will stay in Crete, not content with Crete, not complaisant about Crete, but building the better Crete that is to be. As Paul said, to "set in order the things that were wanting."

When one is in Crete how much easier it is to be indignant than to be constructive!

Most of us, however, face this problem in much more intimate relationships. You know your Crete; I know mine. And we know that our serious inward problem is somehow to keep Crete from becoming our spiritual enemy and to make it our spiritual friend.

An eminent expert on child psychology was called in some time ago to help a young boy who every night dreamed of a frightful tiger. Night after night that dreadful vision came, and the repetition of the fear was shattering the lad's nervous system. So one evening the psychologist gathered the lad into his lap and said to him, "See here, my boy, I understand that every night you meet a tiger. Now, really, he is a nice, friendly tiger and he wants you to like him, so the next time you meet him just put out your hand and say, 'Hello, old chap,' and you will see." So the boy crawled into bed and fell into his restless, apprehensive, tossing sleep. But presently he stirred and thrust a small hand out from under the bedclothes and said softly, "Hello, old chap." Then his frightened breathing quieted into the restfulness of natural sleep. Away at the center of his life he had made friends with his tiger.

That is about the hardest thing some of us have to do: to take a situation that we hate, and say: I am not going to let you be my spiritual enemy; you shall not scare me nor intimidate me nor embitter me nor crush me; like the dragons in old myths, which, boldly faced, turned out to be princesses in disguise, you yet shall be my friend. Happy is the man who so transforms his Crete! Happy is the man who so makes friends with his tiger!

A FUNDAMENTALIST SERMON BY A MODERNIST PREACHER

Jeremiah 6:16

THIS SERMON springs from conversations with two young men. One of them a Jew, the other a Christian, in intellect and character they represent the best we have, and in effect they said the same thing.

Said the young Jew, "Long ago I gave over orthodox Judaism and am a convinced liberal, but sometimes, worshiping in modernist synagogues, I feel that something is missing from our new Judaism which the old Jews had, and that in comparison with theirs our religious faith is thin and superficial."

The young Christian said to me, "I am a modernist. I never could force my mind back into the narrow molds of the old theology, but sometimes, especially in crises, when one wants deep rootage, the modernist soil seems thin. There were power and depth in that old-fashioned Christianity which sometimes we modernists lack."

As I listened to those young men I thought about another Jew, also the best of his time, who long ago in a day of crisis and moral chaos said, "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein."

This morning I share with you the consequence of thinking about these three young men. Let us say plainly at the start that the words of Jeremiah, "Ask for the old paths," are so fundamentalist in tone that one wonders whether any one except a fundamentalist has hitherto preached on them. We, of course, stand stoutly here for the gains of modernism. We do not run our thoughts of God into the molds of old world-views or identify our Christian convictions with obsolete doctrines, miracles, and Biblical inerrancies. We do not believe in the old pictures of creation behind us or of second-comings on the clouds ahead of us. We gratefully accept the new knowledge of the world and we will have our Christianity in terms of thinking that honestly belong to us as intelligent moderns or we will not have it at all. So far from singing,

'Tis the old time religion,
And it's good enough for me,

we would as soon sing that the old ideas of a flat earth or old ways of getting from New York to Chicago are good enough for us. They dis-

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tinctly are not. When, therefore, this morning, we ask for the old paths, we are making no recantation of modernism.

Lowell is right about that:

... Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast
of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate
winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted
key.

That is true. Nevertheless, consider that James Russell Lowell wrote that. He was a very modern man, a Harvard professor, a Unitarian, an emancipated intellectual. Where, then, was he looking for the example of the kind of spirit which he did not wish his generation to lose? Of all places, in the Pilgrim forefathers! How little he would have agreed with most of their opinions! and yet he did wish that his generation might keep something that was deep in the spirit of the Pilgrims at their best. Even he was asking for the old paths.

This, I take it, is what my two young friends meant. This is what we are driving at. Old-fashioned Christianity did have in it something deep and powerful which we modernists often miss.

What we are doing, then, this morning, might be summed up in some such way as this. Our religious modernism, standing for the right of the mind for freedom from the cramping limitations of obsolete theologies, has had to win its way against militant opposition. As always happens in such a case, we have had to show up the faults of the old-fashioned Christianity, take our stand against them, assail their obscurantisms and their appalling appeals to fear. In a word, modernism has been compelled to deal with the old-fashioned Christianity at its worst. Today we are going to take a look at it at its best.

That is fair. If we are to hold the allegiance of my two friends, we had better take a look at the old-fashioned religion at its best. They are right about it. Depth and power were sometimes there which our superficial modernism lacks.

Consider Martin Luther, for example. We could not go back to his theology even if we wanted to. To his dying day he thought the earth was stationary and he even called Copernicus "a new astrologer." He thought that demons caused thunderstorms and is reputed to have hurled his ink pot at the devil. Any modernist can have his fill of condescension, thinking how much better informed he is than Martin Luther.

Yes, but let every modernist remember that once Martin Luther stood in the presence of the Emperor Charles, surrounded by his royal

court, and, knowing well that he was bringing down upon his head the combined wrath of Empire and Church, announced his dangerous convictions, saying, "Here stand I. God help me. I cannot otherwise." What a religion! It produced something that our modernism often does not produce, the unconsenting individual conscience.

If there is one thing that society has a right to expect from religion it is that. As a religious man society does not need me because I happen to believe in evolution or in a law-abiding cosmos. As a religious man society needs me because I am supposed to have an inner loyalty to something greater than kings, stronger than armies, more imperative than popular majorities. As a religious man society needs me because I am supposed to keep my moral watch, not by casual street clocks, but by sun and star time.

That is why so many religious leaders in America protested against the majority decision of the judges of the Supreme Court in the *Macintosh* case. So far as legal technicalities are concerned, that is their affair—we are not competent—but when Justice Sutherland for the majority and Chief Justice Hughes for the minority said what they did say concerning the effect of that decision on religion, then we men of religion knew that Chief Justice Hughes was right.

To say that no man can become a citizen of this republic without agreeing in advance to surrender his conscience to the nation in any future war is to say that citizenship in this nation involves willingness in advance to give up any real religion that he has. For a real religion always erects at the center of a man's life an inner tribunal, his conscience before God, which he must obey rather than anything that any government or any majority may dictate to him.

Now, the old-fashioned Christianity at its best did often produce that unconsenting conscience. To be sure, our forefathers often put their stubborn conscientiousness in dour forms. John Bunyan would stay in jail for his convictions, he said, till the moss did grow upon his eyebrows. Who was it said of John Calvin that he feared God so much he feared nothing else at all? Outgrow the forms if you will; nevertheless, let it be said that old-fashioned Christianity was not emotionally sentimental and morally easy-going like much of our superficial modernism. It did at its best put granite into the characters of men, and sometimes that unconsenting conscience lifted whole groups, like the Puritans and the Pilgrims, into tremendous exploits. I suspect that one of the things which my two young friends miss in some modernism is this moral grip.

To be sure, modernists have often told them that they must clear up the social situation, rebuild the economic order, and improve international relationships. That kind of unconsenting conscience which deals with social evils in the large, modernism distinctly does possess. In that respect I imagine that we have more faith and a better kind of faith than our forefathers had. But these young people discover that

in the meantime, before we have transformed the world, they have another task—to transcend the world, individually to live above it, individually to stand out from it and be superior to it, and from the low levels of its life to appeal to the inner tribunal of conscience. I call you to witness that at that point much of our broad-minded, emancipated, intellectual modernism is soft.

We had better take that truth to heart in this city. You say you never will go back to those old theologies and sectarianisms. I agree. But, my friends, they are not the essence of religion. Remember the words which Myers put upon the lips of St. Paul:

Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny:
yea with one voice, o world, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

That is an essential consequence of genuine religion and for all our new intelligence we had better ask for that old path.

Again, consider a man like St. Augustine, in the fourth and fifth centuries. His theology would be impossible to us. He was so responsible for the doctrine of predestination that if in any kingdom of heaven he knows what came of it on earth he must be penitent and ashamed. Nothing would be easier than for a modernist to condescend to Augustine—until he starts thinking about Augustine's life. Running away from his boyhood's home in North Africa to Italy to escape the influence of his Christian mother, living there with his mistress, prospering as a rhetorician at the headquarters of the Empire, there at last he fell under the spell of a great Christian, Ambrose of Milan. Walking one day in his garden, at war with his own conscience, he thought he heard a voice saying, "Take up and read," and turning to the New Testament his eyes fell on this verse: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." That was to him what the Damascus Road was to Paul or a little Moravian prayer meeting in Old London to John Wesley. From that day his life ran out like an ever-deepening river through one of the most chaotic, desperate eras in history, with the Roman Empire crashing all around him until at last he died courageously in his episcopal city of Hippo while the barbarians were hammering at the city gates. And through it all runs the tremendous power of his prayers. "Come, O Lord, in much mercy down into my soul, and take possession and dwell there. A homely mansion, I confess, for so glorious a Majesty, but such as Thou art fitting up for the reception of Thee. . . . Give me Thine own self, without which, though Thou shouldst give me all that ever Thou hast made, yet could not my desires be satisfied." What a religion!—power over tumultuous passions within and desperate circumstances without. I suspect it is that kind

of thing which my two young friends often miss in superficial modernism.

You see, modernism has stressed activity. We modernists are very busy. The gospel of modernism has largely concerned work. Admirable as that is, our forefathers understood that religion is not simply activity but receptivity. So at their best they struck their roots far down; at their best they dug their wells deep. They did not read so many books as we do but those they did read they thought more about. They did not do so many things as we do but they understood better the uses of solitude. They did not join so many committees as we do but they understood better the meaning of prayer. Sometimes, in consequence, there emerged a personal, spiritual power that puts us to shame.

The progress of spiritual life is in this regard a good deal like the advance of an army—the objectives are ahead but the provisions come from behind. Alas for an army that is all objective and no base! A good deal of our superficial modernism is in precisely that situation today—excellent objectives but the lines of communication with the base of supplies cut, so that, when a crisis falls and brings the impact of its fear and its discouragement, modernism lacks reserves.

If some one says that this is an old man's point of view, I protest. Only this last week there came to see me a young man who was considering the possibility of going over from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. Why? Because, said he, in all his youth in liberal Protestant churches he never had been taught how to pray, and now in a crisis, when things were hard outside and inside, he had found some Roman Catholic friends who knew how to pray and, trying their method, he had found power to carry on. You see, we Protestant modernists have sometimes been so anxious to be liberal that we have forgotten to be religious.

We had better take that to ourselves in this church. We never will go back to old theologies and outgrown sectarianisms. Granted! But we might well go back to One who antedates old theologies and sectarianisms and who long ago, having to face a cross, sought the Father's help in a garden. He never would have been able to face that cross as he did face it without his experience in that garden. As we see him coming out from under the olive trees inwardly ready now for any Calvary with which the world may face him, for all our new intelligence we had better ask for that old path.

Consider again a man like John Calvin. He was too hard and metallic a soul to become fond of easily and he so shared the intolerance of his day that some things he did, like consenting to the death of Servetus, seem to us unforgivable. As for his theology, with the damnation of non-elect infants and the rest, even fundamentalists cannot stomach that. A few years ago in this country, one of our great denominations, I am told, in convention assembled, held a debate as to whether or not

they believed in the damnation of non-elect infants, and as the vote was about to be taken a professor of Greek with a sense of humor rose and said, "Mr. Moderator, would it be possible so to phrase this motion that the effects of it would be made retroactive so that all those helpless infants who have been roasting down there for ages might be saved any further suffering?" The assembly broke down in uncontrollable hilarity. So, nothing could be easier from the standpoint of modern intelligence than to deride John Calvin.

Nevertheless, take one good look more at that terrific theology of his with predestination, election, and eternal punishment. Of course I do not believe it. But I see that at least here was an honest man who did not propose to allow himself soft deceits about the kind of universe he lived in. Go yourself and look at an imbecile child. There is predestination for you. As another said, that child was not born but damned into the world. Look all about you at children, some of them endowed with everything that heredity and early environment give to guarantee achievement and some of them endowed with little or nothing except foretokens of failure and doom. There is election for you, some chosen and some not. Or watch the law-abiding processes of this cosmos where we reap what we sow and men and nations plunge prodigiously through evil-doing into inevitable punishment. There is hell for you, observable to any one with eyes.

The old theological forms in which our forefathers endeavored to put such facts I take to be as dead as Sennacherib, but I call your attention to the sobering truth that in comparison with the candor and fearlessness with which the old-time Christianity faced these facts, our superficial modernism, with its sing-song from Coué that every day, in every way, we are getting better and better, sounds soft and lush and sentimental.

That is why scientists of an earlier day, like Thomas Huxley, or modern agnostics like Walter Lippmann, agree in having more intellectual respect for the old Christianity than for the new, though believing in neither. Listen to Thomas Huxley:

The doctrines of predestination, of original sin, of the innate depravity of man and the evil fate of the greater part of the race . . . faulty as they are, appear to me to be vastly nearer the truth than the "liberal" popular illusions that babies are all born good . . . that it is given to everybody to reach the ethical ideal if he will only try; that all partial evil is universal good, and other optimistic figments, such as that which represents "Providence" under the guise of a paternal philanthropist, and bids us believe that everything will come right (according to our notions) at last.

Indeed, in a time of storm and stress like this, we have some lamentable consequences from the soft and roseate view of the universe

which too often modernism has encouraged. What a stream of individuals appear who, having maintained faith in God while everything was going well, now give it up because some things are going ill! They are fair-weather Christians. They can believe in God as long as they are comfortable but if they are uncomfortable they give up God.

What kind of universe do they think they are living in anyway? This is a wild place. Our forefathers understood that. This is a world where Christs come and are crucified, where being disciples of Christ might mean being boiled in oil. This is a world where whole civilizations crumble into dust so that only archeologists can read the meaning of their hopes and fears. This is a universe where an entire planet, like this earth, once having been uninhabitable, will some day be uninhabitable again, and the fairest hopes that ever stretched their sails upon the human sea can be wrecked and made hulks of by man's unwisdom and his sin. We fair-weather modernists had better salute those old-time Christians. They did not blink the facts. Instead of lying to themselves about the kind of universe this is, they achieved a faith strong enough to rise above it, carry off a spiritual victory in the face of it, and in the darkest hours that ever fell on human history they lifted high an ancient song:

Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof.

.....
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

I suspect it is a realistic and courageous faith like that which my young friends too often miss in modernism, and they are right. Fair-weather Christians are not Christians at all. Look at Christ and see. Not until a man can face, as he faced, the darkest facts of life and still keep his soul unafraid does he know what it means to be a Christian.

An unconsenting individual conscience, the deep secrets of prayer, a courageous faith in God that rises above the darkest facts of life—there were depth and power in that old-time Christianity which our thin modernism often misses. If that be fundamentalism, make the most of it.

You see, we modernists have often gotten at our faith by a negative process. We do not believe this. We do not believe that. We have given up this incredible idea or that obsolete doctrine. So we pare down and dim out our faith by negative abstractions until we have left only the ghostly remainder of what was once a great religion. Then seeing how few our positive convictions are and how little they matter, we grow easy-going about everybody else's convictions, and end in a mush of

general concession. Then a crisis falls upon the individual soul, upon the family, upon the world at large, where a religion that is going to amount to anything must have deep conviction in it. "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock"—how much we need that!

Some of us have never lost that. There is no reason why a modernist should lose that. If modernism is going to make any permanent contribution to the spiritual life of man it must not lose that. Here in this church we will not stand for such thin modernism. O my soul, be broad in your sympathies but, O my soul, go deep in your convictions!

THE POWER TO SEE IT THROUGH

Philemon 24, Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10

CONCERNING one character in the New Testament, mentioned only three times, one suspects that many Christians have not even heard—Demas. He illustrates one of the most familiar tragedies in human life—a fine beginning and a poor ending. He lacked the power to see it through. First, in Paul's letter to Philemon, we read, "Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers." So Demas, along with Luke, and named first at that, was standing by Paul in his Roman imprisonment, a devoted and promising disciple. Second, in Paul's letter to the Colossians, we read, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas." Reading that, one wonders why Demas and Luke, who were praised together at the first, were separated in this passage as though Luke indeed retained Paul's confidence as "the beloved physician" but Demas had become merely "Demas." Third, in the second letter to Timothy, incorporating, we suppose, one of the last messages Paul ever wrote, we read, "Demas forsook me, having loved this present age." Three points on a curve, that enable us to plot its graph! For here is the story of a man who

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made an excellent beginning and a wretched ending: Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me.

Intimate companions of Paul in the Roman circle, Luke and Demas must have known each other very well. Now, Luke is the only narrator of Jesus' life whose Gospel records the parable about the man who started to build a tower and was not able to finish. Matthew did not refer to that, nor Mark, nor John—only Luke. One wonders if he remembered it because of Demas. Demas was slipping, let us say. Through Paul's little group in Rome anxious apprehension ran that Demas was not holding out, and one imagines Luke pleading with his friend. The Master himself, he might have said, warned his first disciples about the peril which is besetting you. For once he said, "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." So one thinks of Luke pleading with his friend. At least Luke, alone among the evangelists, put the parable into his Gospel. He had seen its truth too vividly illustrated ever to forget it: Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me.

Obviously the qualities which make a good start possible are not identical with the qualities which see life through to the end. In no realm are starting power and staying power the same thing. A ship can make a grand getaway at the launching only to make a poor stand later against the fury of the waves and winds when the northeasters are unleashed. So one sees in Demas a character—how familiar!—capable of fine impulses, generous responses, idealistic loyalties, and eager loves; only he lacked staying power.

One thinks of this not simply because of the New Year season, which is naturally a festival of fresh beginnings, but because our generation has so emphatically stressed the gospel of a good start. How strongly we feel the importance of childhood and of the influences that play on childhood! To give a child a good start, we say, is the most essential benediction that can be bestowed upon him. That emphasis is profoundly important and it represents truth, only not the whole truth. Many of us here had a good start. We have no complaints about that. In family and church, in school and early Christian training, we had a fine beginning. But for all that, some of us are Demas and all of us know we could have been. Over what thin ice have we skated! How easily we could have broken through! How many of us here have already fallen far from a faith that once was strong and a character that once was clean! We know Demas. The mirror shows him to us. Introspection reveals the process of his downfall. Nearly two thousand years ago he lived and died, his very name barely preserved, as though by accident, and yet how vivid he is in our imaginations! Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me, having loved this present age.

However beautiful one's beginning, nothing matters much in human life without a good end. One does not mean that we may demand an outwardly successful and fortunate conclusion, as in old sentimental novels where everything had to come out happily. But without a *good* end, without morale and staying power and steady character to see a man through to a worthy conclusion, what else in life can be much worth while? Jesus could have spoiled everything in the Garden of Gethsemane and, had he done that, all for nothing would have gone his unremembered Sermon on the Mount and his unselfish months of ministry. The career of Jesus was like splitting a log. Every previous blow of the ax is indispensable but it is the last blow that splits it. So we know there was a Christ, and the rich meanings of his ministry have come to us because he had staying power to go through to the end, where he could say, "It is finished."

What is the most lamentable tragedy in human life? To face suffering, to be cruelly handicapped? Surely not! For we have seen some terribly handicapped people who had such moral staying power that they came through to a great conclusion, all their flags flying when they came into port. But there is a tragedy so appalling that, when one has seen it, the very reminiscence of it makes one's blood run cold—to be fortunately born, to have a glorious boyhood, to rise to responsible position, to be loved and trusted, and then to crack as though all the time the shining metal had had a flaw in it, to betray one's trust, deceive one's friends, blow out one's brains! You see, whether it be in dramatic fashion like that or in homelier wise, where a fine beginning lapses by slow degrees into a disheveled ending, Demas is the tragedy.

In this regard life is like marriage. How beautifully love begins! With what romantic launchings it can get its start! But we elders, who watch the young folks at their lovemaking and their weddings, habitually ask a deeper question. They have qualities that can start a home; have they the qualities that keep one—the deep fidelity, the long-term loyalty, the steady and abiding love that keep a home? For in marriage, as in all life, a good beginning only makes more tragic an unhappy end.

On this first Sunday of the New Year, therefore, let us not talk together about starting power—every soul here has more than once made a fine beginning—but about staying power. I celebrate the qualities of faith and character that enable a man to see life through.

For one thing, staying power is always associated with a certain central integrity of conscience. Whatever else life may give or may deny, one thing is absolutely indispensable—that a man should not break faith with himself, that he should keep his honor bright in his own eyes, that whatever else may fail he should not inwardly be a failure. Such quality of conscience, making it indispensable that, whatever happens, a man live on high terms with himself, is of the essence of staying power, and it is the glory of great artists that com-

monly in their art they have exhibited it. Elsner was a teacher of music in Warsaw to whom came, one day, a young man for music lessons, and at the end of the first term one finds this in Elsner's record: "Lessons in musical composition: Chopin, Fryderyk, third year student—amazing capabilities, musical genius." That was a fine start. But to finish that career was costly. It cost hard work—one would take that for granted. It cost discouraged hours—one would expect that. But, deeper yet, Chopin's career cost conscience. He would not, for popularity's sake, write music that violated his own interior standards. One thing was absolutely indispensable, no matter what happened: he had to keep faith musically with himself. So Chopin became *Chopin*. As another put it, "The artist's conscience is a fearful thing."

As we see Paul and Demas in Rome, it is obvious Paul had *that*. He would have liked outward good fortune and success could he have had them on honorable terms—of course he would! But whether fortune or misfortune befell, one thing was absolutely indispensable—he had to keep faith with himself and the Christ within him. Not simply as a matter of duty but as a matter of happiness, that was indispensable. Demas, however, was of another sort. He soon found something else indispensable. "Demas forsook me," wrote Paul, "having loved this present age." So that was it! Roman civilization was brilliant like our own. It had ugly aspects but for agile minds and grasping hands there were prizes to be gained. All around Paul's poor prison house was Rome. So Demas, no Chopin in his character, cheapened his music. He did not have an artist's conscience. Christ had never dug so deep as that into Demas. To be loyal to the royal in himself was not absolutely indispensable. He loved this present age.

You see, I am not really talking about Demas now, but about us. One would not minimize the sacrifices that such a conscience as we are speaking of often costs in a world like this, but the great souls who have most possessed such conscience have commonly thought of it not as a burden of duty but as a gospel of liberty. Listen! No man ever needs to be a failure. Trouble, outward breakdown of hopes, may come, but a man who cares most that he should not be a failure can capitalize trouble. "All sunshine," say the Arabs, "makes Sahara." Men may give the hemlock to Socrates, nail Jesus to the cross, behead Paul outside the gates of Rome. Livingstone may die in the heart of Africa, his work unfinished, and Lincoln may be shot by a crazy man. All such souls have known an inner liberty. Whatever happened, they did not need to *be* failures. That was within their control. Still they could be loyal to the royal in themselves and come to their last port with their flags flying.

That is the final difference between people. Paul faced many kinds of failure but he himself was no failure. If, however, the old legend is correct, Demas went back to Thessalonica and became a priest of idols in a pagan temple. He himself was a failure.

In the second place, staying power is always associated with the experience of being captured by a cause, laid hold on by something greater than oneself to which one gives one's loyalty—an art, a science, a vocation, a social reform, an object of devotion which one conceives to be more important than oneself. This was the common property of those to whom we have turned as illustrations of persistent character—Chopin in music, Socrates in philosophy, Livingstone as a missionary, Lincoln as a statesman with a cause. They all cared for something superior to themselves to which they gave their long-term loyalty, so that they stood the gaff, as we say, in their individual fortunes, and followed through to a strong conclusion for their causes' sake. All staying power in character is associated with that.

Christ had never gotten so deep as that into Demas. Demas had laid hold on some of the more comfortable aspects of the Christian gospel, but the Christian gospel had never laid hold on Demas. Demas had possessed himself of this or that detail of Christ's message, but Christ had not possessed himself of Demas. So the man's Christianity was a superstructure easily put up, easily taken down—jerry-building on slim foundations. For the foundation of enduring character is always laid in something greater than oneself which one will serve through life and death.

A fascinating contrast exists between two phrases in the New Testament: the first, Paul's description of Demas—"having loved this present age"; the second, the description of an apostate in the Epistle to the Hebrews as one who, having "tasted the . . . powers of the age to come," falls away. So, *that* is the gist of the matter as the New Testament sees it. An apostate is a man who loves the *status quo*, this present age; a Christian is a man who tastes the powers, is laid hold on by the hopes, of the age to come.

When some one tries to tell you that the Christian social gospel is a modern innovation, not in the New Testament, face him with that. The Christian social gospel is in the very heart of the New Testament—set, to be sure, in mental frameworks appropriate to the first century and different from ours but indubitably there. The primary emphasis on the kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching and in the first church was so dominant that they tested Christian discipleship by it. A man who loved this present age was an apostate; a man who tasted the powers of the age to come was a Christian. Whenever we see a New Testament Christian carrying through to the finish, one fact is always apparent: he had set his devotion on a coming kingdom of God on earth for which he was willing to live or die.

The upshot is that one often sees today outside the church men who seem closer akin to New Testament Christianity than many inside the churches. Sometimes a downright unbelieving scientist who gives himself to his science and for the sake of humanity stands by it, serving it through thick and thin to the end, seems closer to a New Testa-

ment Christian than many of us in the churches. At any rate, he is tasting the powers of the age to come.

Or consider a man who puts his conscience above narrow nationalism, who not simply on Sunday, as in the navy, but every day runs the white flag of the gospel to the top of the mast with the Stars and Stripes under it. He will no longer subjugate his conscience before God to the mad paganism of nationalistic policies which even now, by old familiar steps, are leading mankind to another holocaust. Such a man may be, and often is, very disturbing but he is closer akin to a New Testament Christian than many in our churches. At least he has tasted the powers of the age to come.

Or here is a man who is not beguiled by the present pick-up in business. He knows it is here. Millions of our people are better off than they were, and he, of course, is glad of improved conditions for any one. But he knows that not by a long way does that mean we have solved our economic problem. He is aware that in this city, in prosperous days, 1,800,000 people were living in old-law tenements not fit for human occupation. He knows that in the Southern cotton fields are share-croppers living under a kind of peonage which by comparison makes preferable the lot of many a serf in the medieval age. He knows that in so wealthy a city as Chicago, in the heyday of our prosperity, an investigation by the organized philanthropies revealed that city charities were giving to families on their poor list a stipend larger than two-thirds of the unskilled laborers investigated could possibly earn for their families when they were fully employed. He knows the estimate that, in 1929, of our American families one-tenth of one per cent at the upper end of the economic scale was getting a combined income equal to that of forty-two per cent at the other end of the scale, a condition in the face of which words like "democracy," "liberty," "equality," lose their meaning. He knows that whereas we have been plowing under cotton, killing off livestock, reducing wheat acreage and all the rest, an interesting study recently made reveals that if American families maintained a good standard of health diet it would require 41,000,000 more acres under cultivation, not less. A man who keeps hammering on such facts, who will not let them drop, who keeps saying with Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me," who insists that we must go deeper, think harder, face changes more profound than the alleviations we are tinkering with now, may be disturbing, but once more he is closer to New Testament Christianity than many of us are. He has tasted the powers of the age to come.

This is the outstanding challenge to us in the churches—our attitude not on theological questions but on practical, ethical, social questions. We find it easy to love this present age. We make fine beginnings, especially at New Year's time, but then some comfortable corner of this present age invites us and we nestle down. So our Christian pro-

fession lapses, our faith grows formal, and we do not amount to much in the end as Christians. If I should accuse some of you of being Judas Iscariot you would be indignant. You would never deliberately sell anybody out. But Demas—how many of us have been that!

Finally, staying power is commonly associated with profound resources of interior strength replenished by great faiths. "I had fainted, unless I had believed" is a sentence in the Bible that is true of life. We do faint, peter out, go flat, lose our morale, unless our interior resources are replenished by faith in something. We may be sure that Demas, before he left Paul, had lost some of his first convictions about Christ and the God whom Christ revealed.

Suppose that some one should ask us what our faith in the Christian God does for us. What would we say? For one thing, I should say that when a man believes in God he need not worry about the universe any more. That is off our hands if God has it on his. If I imagined the universe as without any God, aimless, purposeless, an accidental dance of atoms, spiritually meaningless, then I would worry about it. As Carlyle said, a cosmos like that is "one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference to grind me from limb to limb." But if a man believes in God, that is off his mind. He can concentrate upon the task in hand, get on with his moral business here on earth with some high hopes about its outcome, and not be haunted by a huge, cosmic apprehension.

Deeper yet, a vital faith in God means a faith in an eternal moral purpose in the light of which a thousand years are as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night. That gives a man wide horizons, long outlooks, steady hopes, so that, instead of losing heart over the disappointment of some immediate expectation, one still has standing ground for faith and carries on. Of all mad things in history can we think of anything madder, with Nero upon his throne and Paul in his prison, than to have believed that the gospel for which Paul stood would outlast and wear down the Empire? That is probably what "got" Demas—the tremendous power of Rome compared with the seeming weakness of Christ's gospel. Who in a sober and realistic hour could have supposed that Paul would outwear Nero? But that, you see, is exactly what happened. A man who has faith in God always expects that to happen, though it take a thousand years. So, of course, he carries on.

Deeper yet, a vital faith in God gives a man available resources of interior power. We do not so much produce power as appropriate it. That is true from the harnessing of Niagara to eating a dinner or taking a walk in the fresh air. So, a man with real faith in God senses around his spiritual life a spiritual Presence as truly as the physical world is around his body, and as truly from that divine companionship he draws replenished strength. He knows the deep wells of staying power.

I celebrate the resources of a Christian faith to see a man through.

If faith in God means such things, how do men live without it? How do they meet the shocks of fate, the ugliness of evil, the shame of man's inhumanity to man, the disheartenment of moral failure, the impact of personal sorrow, and still keep their morale? I celebrate the resources of Christian faith.

Technically I know little or nothing about music. I venture this comment, however, about the difference between the best of the old music and the ordinary run of the new. The trouble with much of the new music, as an older man at least sees it, is not its noisy cacophony but something deeper: it never seems to believe in anything enough so that it thinks it worth while to say it over and over again. It picks up a trivial theme and drops it. It never goes through with any thing. It lacks sustained convictions. It is filled with unimportant discontinuities. When, however, one hears a great symphony by Tschaiikowsky, let us say, or Beethoven, *there* are convictions so profoundly believed that the music goes through with them to the very end. The hearer says to himself, Surely that theme has been said as beautifully as ever it can be said. Yet that theme returns again and again, elevated and resplendent beyond our dream. One says to oneself, Now, surely, all the possibilities have been exhausted, and, lo! at last the theme marches back once more into the music, glorious as an army with banners. Whatever may be our judgment about music, great living is like that. Is there anything a man could wish for his friends at New Year's time better than such a life—great convictions which life develops, expands, elevates, and glorifies, fine at the beginning, loveliest of all at the last? Is there anything a man would better pray to avoid than the opposite?—Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me.

HANDLING LIFE'S SECOND-BESTS

Acts 16:7-10

WE ARE CONCERNED today about a factual personal problem so nearly universal in its application that we need not be bothered by its exceptions: namely, that very few persons have a chance to live their lives on the basis of their first choice. We all have to live upon the basis of our second and third choices. To one who reads biography this comes to be so much a matter of course that he takes it for granted.

Whistler, the artist, for example, started out to be a soldier and failed at West Point because he could not pass in chemistry. "If silicon had been a gas," he used to say, "I should have been a major-general." Instead, he failed in soldiering, half-heartedly tried engineering, and then tried painting—with such remarkable results as one sees in the portraits of his own mother, Miss Alexander, and Carlyle.

Let us approach this inescapable human problem of handling life's second-bests by way of one of the most impressive exhibitions of it in history. In the sixteenth chapter of the book of The Acts, in the record of Paul's journeys, we read this: "When they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them."

So simple and succinct is this narrative that one would little suspect that we are dealing with one of the most significant events in human history. Here Christianity passed over from Asia into Europe. It was a momentous day when Columbus set sail from the shores of Spain or Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route to the Indies, but could even such events be more pregnant with consequence than the day when Paul carried Christianity out of Asia, in a few centuries to be overrun by Mohammedanism, through Troas into Macedonia and so to Europe, where Christianity was going to have its chance? But Paul had not planned to go to Europe. That was a second choice. Paul had planned to go to Bithynia. "They assayed," it reads, "to go into Bithynia." And no wonder, for Bithynia was one of the richest provinces of Asia Minor, and to have carried Christianity there would have been a triumph indeed.

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Moreover, we may be sure that if Paul wanted to go into Bithynia he wanted to go very much and tried to go very hard, for Paul was never a half-way man. And he could not go; the way was blocked; his plan was broken. We read, "The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not," but that is only another way of saying that some circumstance blocked their course. It must have seemed to Paul lamentable at first. I picture him arriving on the shores of the Aegean, saying, I wanted to go to Bithynia and here I am in Troas! And lo! through Troas a way opened to the preëminent ministry of his career. Paul rendered his most significant service with the left-overs of a broken plan.

Wanting Bithynia and getting Troas, how familiar an experience that is! But to take Troas, the second-best, the broken plan, the left-over of a disappointed expectation, and make of it the greatest opportunity we ever had, how much less familiar that is! Yet, as one reads the story of human life, one sees that powerful living has always involved such a victory as Paul won in Troas over his own soul and his situation.

When a career has at last been finished and the halo of well-deserved reputation now hangs over it so that one cannot think the name without thinking of some high enterprise with which the name is indissolubly associated, then in the glamour of that retrospect we are tempted to forget that almost always the turning point of the career is the experience that Paul had—getting Troas when he wanted Bithynia.

When, for example, we think of Phillips Brooks, we think of spiritual ministry, a great personality pouring his soul out with abundant power upon the people. Of all the letters that Phillips Brooks received, it is said that he cherished most this one from a small tailor shop near Copley Square in Boston: "Dear Mr. Brooks: I am a tailor in a little shop near your Church. Whenever I have the opportunity I always go to hear you preach. Each time I hear you preach I seem to forget all about you, for you make me think of God." Nevertheless, remember that Phillips Brooks did not plan to be a preacher. He planned to be a teacher. That was his Bithynia. As soon as he graduated from college he plunged into his chosen profession of teaching and he failed. He failed completely. Listen to young Brooks writing about his scholars as he is failing: "They are the most disagreeable set of creatures without exception that I have ever met with. . . . I really am ashamed of it but I am tired, cross and almost dead, so good night." Listen to Phillips Brooks after he had failed and been dropped from his position: "I don't know what will become of me and I don't care much"; "I shall not study a profession"; "I wish I were fifteen years old again. I believe I might make a stunning man: but somehow or other I don't seem in the way to come to much now." Listen to Phillips Brooks's

father, concerned about his son, so humiliated that he will not talk even with his friends: "Phillips will not see anyone now, but after he is over the feeling of mortification, he will come and see you."

There is a sense in which Brooks never recovered from the disappointment. At the flower of his career he came down once from the office of President Eliot of Harvard white as a sheet and fairly trembling because he had declined what he knew to be his last opportunity to become a teacher. He wanted Bithynia and he got Troas but through Troas he found the door into a service that if he had lived a hundred lives he might never have found again.

Or consider Sir Walter Scott. We think of him as the novel-writer whose stories charmed our youth so that for many years some of us would have voted *Ivanhoe* the best tale ever told. Sir Walter, however, did not want to be a novelist; he planned to be a poet, but Byron's sun rose and dimmed his lesser light. "Byron hits the mark," he said, "where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow." Then he turned to writing novels, so ashamed that, as you know, he published the first of them anonymously. He did not want any one to know that he was writing novels. He wanted Bithynia; he got Troas and through Troas an open door to the best work he ever did.

Is there anybody here who has not wanted Bithynia and gotten Troas? We older people watch the youths come up, as we did, with their ambitions and plans for Bithynia and we wonder what they will do when they face the inescapable experience. When they are shut out from some Bithynia and land in Troas, will they know how to handle that? Will they have the spirit and attitude and the technique to make of it their finest chance? And since it is so inescapable a problem, we well may ask what it was in Paul that enabled him to turn his defeat into victory.

For one thing, his religion entered in. Whatever else was shaken when he got to Troas, his conviction still was there that God had a purpose for his life, that if God had led him to Troas there must be something in Troas worth discovering, that God's purposes included Troas just as much as Bithynia, that God never leads any man into any place where all the doors are shut. Paul's religion entered in.

It is in just such situations as this that one can tell how much real religion a man has. We hear a man reciting a familiar creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," but no matter how serious he may seem about it you cannot tell from that alone how real it is to him. You hear a man singing,

He leadeth me: O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

But however much in earnest he may seem you cannot tell from that alone how deep it goes with him. When, however, you see a man who, wanting Bithynia, gets Troas and, still certain that there is a purpose for his life, takes a positive attitude toward Troas as if to say, If God has led me here there is something worth while here to do, you know that that man's religion is practically operative. If, therefore, Paul had merely said what he did say, "To them that love God all things work together for good," we might have cocked suspicious eyebrows at him, thinking that that proposition is extraordinarily difficult to prove. What is impressive about Paul is that whenever he did land in a disappointing Troas, and he landed in a good many of them, he did so effectually love God that he *made* all things work together for good. Paul's religion meant to him a positive faith about life and a positive attitude toward life so effective that watching his career is again and again like watching the Battle of Marengo—in the morning an obvious defeat, in the afternoon a resounding victory.

Consider a modern counterpart of Paul, Adoniram Judson. When Judson was a young man he gave himself to missionary service and his ambition centered on India. That was his Bithynia. When at last he reached India they would not let him in. The East India Company would not allow him to stay and the governor told him to take the first ship back to America. For a year he labored to open the doors of India and they were bolted shut. So he turned to Burma. That was his Troas, unknown, untouched Burma. Can one suppose that through all that humiliation and disappointment Judson could always see the leadership of God? Of course he could not; he was human. Can one suppose during those months that he lay in the prison of the Emperor at Ava and Oung-Pen-La he could always see evidences of the divine purpose? Of course he could not; he was human. But he did so handle the affair in Burma that the doors began to open until no well-instructed man today can think of Burma without thinking of Adoniram Judson, or think of Adoniram Judson without thinking of Burma; and when the consequence began to appear he could look upon his life in retrospect as though it had been planned of God. To live your life through—not argue it through; that never is sufficient—to *live* your life through into the conviction that there is an eternal Purpose with which a man can ally himself is one of the finest achievements of the human spirit.

Altogether the most thrilling story of the Old Testament is on this theme. One day in Palestine we stopped our automobile by the roadside and ate our lunch at Dotham where long ago Joseph had been sold by his brethren. Still the camel trail goes up from across Jordan, and then runs down to the coast cities and so to Egypt. Now Joseph, stolen from his home, betrayed by his brethren, dropped into a pit, sold to Midianite slave-dealers, made a man-servant in a household in Egypt, lied about by his master's wife and put in prison—can one

suppose that during all that humiliation and disgrace he could see where God was taking him? Of course not. But he so kept his faith and handled his life that the doors opened into the biggest business of his career, and when at last those penitent and frightened brethren stood before him, you remember what he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

Such was Paul's feeling as he looked back on the day he missed Bithynia and found Troas, and such will be ours if in Troas we will let our religion enter in.

In the second place it was not simply Paul's religion that enabled him to win this victory but the fine fruit of his religion, his care about people.

The trouble with so many of us when we land in Troas is that we begin to pity ourselves. Paul could have done that. He could have started the process we indulge in—"ifing."

If I had not missed Bithynia; if my plans had not been broken, if, if! I have given up everything for Jesus Christ. I could today be one of the great rabbis of Jerusalem saluted in the market place. I have given it all up for Christ. I spent a long time in Arabia thinking through the gospel. I have been fourteen years in a trying, difficult, unrecognized ministry in Cilicia, at odds even with my Christian brethren because once I persecuted them. And now, when I am beginning to get on a good footing with my fellow Christians, with Barnabas and a few others trusting me, I have come up through Asia Minor on a preaching mission. See what they have done to me. They stoned me and left me for dead in Lystra. Even after that, all I asked was that I might have a chance to get into Bithynia and do some good work, and now I cannot; I am foiled; my plan is broken.

How easy it would have been for Paul in Troas to feel sorry for himself!

Upon the contrary, he at once began thinking about other people. He wondered if there was not some one who might be better off because he had landed in Troas. He had not been there a night before he saw a man from Macedonia saying, Come over and help us. It was Paul's unselfishness, his generosity, his magnanimity that opened the doors for him in Troas.

Once there was a man named William Duncan who gave himself to the missionary cause and in time was sent by his board to a little Indian island off Alaska called Metlakatla. It was an unlikely Troas for a young man to land in who had doubtless dreamed of some Bi-

thynia, for those Indians were a poor, ignorant, miserable tribe, and their morals were vile beyond description. Dean Brown of Yale, however, who visited Metlakatla after William Duncan had been there about forty years, made this report, that you will find every Indian family in a separate house with all the decent appointments of home life, that you will find a bank, a coöperative store, a sawmill, a box factory, and a salmon cannery run by Indians in profitable industry, that you will find a school where Indian boys and girls learn to read and write and think and live, and a church where an Indian minister preaches the gospel of eternal life and an Indian musician, who once was a medicine man playing a tom-tom, now plays a pipe organ, and a congregation of Indians sing the great hymns of the church to the praise of Almighty God—and all because a man named William Duncan, landing in Troas, cared enough about people to find there the chance of his life!

My friends, there is nothing in that spirit or consequence that cannot be transferred to our lives. We are all in Troas. Just as at Sebastapol each heart thought a different name while they all sang Annie Laurie, so when today we say "Troas" each one of us thinks of some situation we would not have planned to be in. There is only one way—love. Was it not George Macdonald who said: "Nothing makes a man strong like a cry for help"? You walk down the street utterly fatigued, so tired that you would like to lie down on the curb and go to sleep, and suddenly there is a cry; there has been an accident; a child is hurt; and you never will remember how tired you are until it is all over. Nothing makes a man so strong as a call for help.

A mother is completely fatigued. She has been telling her friends for weeks that there is nothing left of her, and then a child falls ill and needs her. Week after week, by night and day, she stands by and never thinks of being tired. Nothing makes a man strong like a call for help.

It would be strange indeed if there were not some young men and women here not altogether dull to the dangers of our civilization, not altogether blind to the possibility of losing it, thinking that perhaps there is something in them that might help build a more decent world for human children to be born in. That is their strength. Nothing makes a man so strong as a call for help. And the trouble is that when we get into Troas we pity ourselves; we miss that man from Macedonia, saying, Come over and help us.

Indeed, so true is this principle of life that it holds good of even small excursions into Troas. When annoyances and irritations come, when one is lied about and hated and denounced, there is only one way out—goodwill. You remember Edwin Markham's lines:

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

If in the midst of life's harassments and irritations one has grace enough to do that, he sometimes will find in that very difficulty his choicest opportunity for usefulness.

This, then, is the conclusion of the matter: that because Paul had these two elements in his life, as soon as he landed in Troas his imagination was filled, not with defeat but with victory. Coué was right that it is the imagination which makes or unmakes us. If you put a thirty-foot plank as high as a cathedral tower hardly anybody can walk it, and it is not because the physical difficulties are greater than they would be on the ground but because one's imagination keeps picturing him falling off. So when we get into Troas we think we are defeated. I wanted Bithynia, we say; I have got Troas. So we think defeat, we say defeat, we imagine defeat, and we are defeated. But as soon as Paul landed in Troas he saw an open door, a beckoning man, a new chance, and a successful issue.

What helped him most, I suspect, was that his thought went back, as it so habitually did, to the cross of his Master. That was a Troas to land on! What a Bithynia it would have been if his people had accepted Jesus as Messiah! And now, shut out from that Bithynia, he came to his Troas, his Calvary, and he so clothed it with the purpose of God and the love of man that

All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

He took a very hard thing and he made of it a triumph.

CHRISTIANS IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING

Philippians 4:22

MANY find it difficult, if not impossible, to be Christians because, as they see it, they are living in so powerfully unchristian a world. They might make a success of the Christian life if the social environment would only give them a decent chance, but how can one be Christian, they think, in a world like this? Even Jesus got himself crucified for trying it.

The mail from the radio audience often expresses this mood. In a world of war and economic injustice, amid the down-drag of pagan customs, why torment our individual consciences with urgent appeals to be Christian, when we can never get good Christians until we have a good world? So they write, and much of what they say has so much truth in it, and yet is so inadequate to cover the case, that I invite your consideration of the matter.

First, let us put it biographically. Paul in his Roman prison writing to his Philippian friends, ended his letter saying, "All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Caesar's household." Saints in Caesar's household! That was a strange place in which to try to be a Christian—in the imperial retinue of Nero among the lesser nobility, it may be, but especially among the freemen and the slaves. We continually complain at having our fine ideals of brotherhood knocked about and battered by militant nationalism, but think of trying to be a Christian in Caesar's household! We lament the grossness of our commercialised amusements which vulgarise and sometimes brutalise the public taste but, recollecting only the frescoes of Pompeii, think of trying to be a saint at Nero's court! We complain against the greed and cruelty of our social order and the nonchalance and carelessness with which our life proceeds in the face of it, but think of Nero's palace and the Colosseum as a background against which to try to be a Christian! When we have allowed all the justifiable excuses we can muster from our social environment, there still remains something more to say about people who have been Christians in spite of everything.

In other realms than Christian faith and character—the arts, for example—this same truth holds. Creative genius has risen into splendour in many places outside the areas we would have thought fortunate for its emergence. There are times, to be sure, like Elizabethan England, when a confluence of factors creates a culture out of which artists rise with prolific prodigality. But that does not cover the case or remotely suggest the infinite diversity of circumstance, often fiercely antagonistic, where great art has risen in spite of everything.

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Mozart was so poor that all his life was a heartbreaking struggle and he was buried in a pauper's grave, while Mendelssohn was so well-to-do he never had to think of self-support. John Keats was so crippled by poverty that it is an agony to read his life, while Browning from his youth up was amply cared for by his patrimony. Infinite has been the diversity of circumstance within which creative genius has burned like fire. We commonly think of art as beautiful. Of course it is, but behind the beauty and indispensable to it is this tougher, hardier matter—a man who has the stuff of creative genius in him will be an artist in spite of everything.

Abstract that spirit from Christian faith and character and we have emasculated it. Surely, some one here to-day needs to hear that said.

For one thing, if we are to stop blaming spiritual failure on outward circumstance and are to achieve a spiritual victory in the midst of hostile environment, it will be in part because we take antagonistic circumstance for granted as a natural, inevitable part of the problem. Christianity essentially means winning a spiritual victory in the face of hostile circumstance; that is what being a Christian is about. From a rocky farm in Connecticut, across which one could almost walk on the stones without touching the ground, comes a story which, though seemingly irreverent, voices a healthy philosophy. A minister visited one of his parishioners on a farm which, hitherto a failure, was now, by dint of tireless labour, being made a success. "So," said the minister, "God and you are getting on very well here." "Yes," said the farmer, "but you should have seen this place before, when God was trying to handle it alone." Exactly! To start thus with a difficult situation as a place to begin being what Paul called a fellow-worker with God, is the very stuff of robust Christianity.

Many in our time, however, are powerfully tempted to another and a softer attitude, in part because attributing inward failure to outward circumstance is always popular and in part because social pessimism is now in the ascendancy and we think we have a dreadfully bad external situation on which to blame spiritual collapse. When my generation was young we were optimistic. We came at the climax of an amazing accumulation of social encouragements crowned by the doctrine of evolution, which to our young and kindled eyes made the whole cosmos seem a going and growing concern. Social optimism was then in the ascendancy but it is not so now. The catastrophe of war has broken through the thin veneer of our civilisation and revealed the savagery beneath. Some of our contemporary pessimism is healthy. The optimism was pleasanter but much of it was unjustified and cheap. We have a chance now to be more soundly realistic than we used to be. But some of our current pessimism works a disastrous consequence in that it gives multitudes of people, who are glad enough to take it, a chance to say that in so crazy and dishevelled a world they see no use in trying to be Christians at all. I want another

slogan to sound in the consciences of some here to-day tempted to take that attitude—Saints in Caesar's household. A spiritual victory won in the face of hostile environment—that is what being a Christian is all about.

Of course, I understand the protest which is already rising in some minds. Some may be saying:

This is a high-sounding exhortation, telling us to be Christians in spite of everything, but, so far as millions of our population are concerned, it is nonsense. To be a Christian in spite of being born and reared in the depth of some city slum, to be a Christian in spite of being a child in a sharecropper's family with never a decent thing to civilise and elevate the soul, to be a Christian despite the fact that, like multitudes of young people, one finds it economically impossible to marry and found a home, or despite the insanity of nations periodically plunging their youth into the hell of war—what absurdity is this! Far from saying that we should be Christians in spite of everything, it would be fairer to say that we must change pretty nearly everything in order to get Christians at all.

To all of this I should answer, That is handsomely said, but you have forgotten one thing. Make that kind of excuse for everybody else but not for yourself. Never! For yourself no default! Go out, indeed, to help change circumstance, which so crucially needs to be changed. Strength and courage to you as you try to lift the handicaps that so cruelly rest on human souls! But for yourself, no excuses, no defence mechanisms, no passing of the buck! A clean conscience whatever happens, a saint even in Caesar's household, a spiritual victory despite circumstance—that is every man's business *with himself*.

Cannot we imagine John Keats lamenting the lost poetry of young and kindled souls in whom beauty might have sung its way to immortal fame but who, crushed by poverty, found their songs quenched before they started? So Keats might have lamented and one can imagine his labouring sympathetically and indignantly to change circumstance so as to make poets possible. But for himself, though he was so poor that often his days were misery, he took no leave from that to stop his singing. For himself, no default. "I think," he said once, in one of the most wretched periods of his life, "I shall be among the English poets after my death."

So, wherever one looks—in science, the arts, music, Christian character, practical success even—one finds this basic duty: endless sympathy for anyone else crushed by external circumstance, but for oneself no blame of inward failure on outward environment!

Consider, again, that if a man is to make a high success of his spiritual life in the midst of hostile environment, it will be in part because he centres his attention not so much upon his outward pressures as upon

his interior resources. Whenever in any realm you find a saint in Caesar's household, you may be sure that deep within him this thing has happened: he has cultivated a keen awareness of his spiritual resources so that in the orientation of his thinking they have become most real to him and his consciousness of the outward environment has been secondary. *That* constitutes one of the profoundest differences between people.

How many great books, for example, have been written in prison! Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians in prison, Cervantes started *Don Quixote* there, and John Bunyan worked on *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Bedford Jail. When one considers how they could do that, it is evident that they must have concentrated their attention on their interior resources rather than on their outward circumstances. Like all the rest of us, they lived in two worlds: first, the external system of circumstances alien to their wishes, antagonistic to their finest aspirations, a veritable prison house; but, on the other side, the inner world where a man's mind may be his kingdom, where there are doors of the spirit which a man can open and which then no man or circumstance can shut—realms, principalities, and dominions of the soul where one walks at liberty. As between these two, they so minimised the outer and maximised the inner that they proved to themselves and to mankind that

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.

Granting that this illustration is drawn from extraordinary experience, it is still true to our ordinary life. For it is our externalism that commonly ruins us, our absorption with things, our obsessed attention habitually given to the setting of our lives, so that were we to be in Bedford Jail it would be a long time before we thought of anything except the jail; not readily would it occur to us that even there the soul might walk the Delectable Mountains. So, because we take our cue for everything from circumstances, when we face circumstances hostile to high character we blame moral failure on that. We take our moral cue also from environment. One hates to think what some of us would have been in Nero's court. We would have gone native with a vengeance and the excuse would have been ready, What else do you expect in Caesar's household?

As a matter of fact, as I understand my own soul, that is an illegitimate excuse. The worst foes of my spiritual life have never been hostile circumstance. Upon the contrary, sometimes hostile circumstance has been like a strong wind on a flying field, a grand force to take off against for a flight, if one knows how to do it. The deepest foes of my spiritual life have had their origin far down within the soul. There is no situation into which life ever put me that I could not have handled

better than I did if I could have got my eyes more on, and made more out of, the interior resources of the soul, until *that* was the realest world to me.

Does someone say that it is hard work being a Christian if one is very poor? Of course it is. But imagine yourself very rich. Do you think it would be easier then? You know who said it was easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is hard to be a Christian if one is very poor and, if anything, it is harder if one is very rich. That is to say, it is hard to be a Christian anywhere in a world like this and, whether rich or poor, in whatever environment life may be set, there is no such thing as triumphant living save as one learns the secret which Mrs. Browning once put into four simple but profound words: "Life develops from within." So! Show us any great soul that has risen triumphant out of trouble. That is the secret—life develops from within. If a man lets his life develop from without, if he takes the moral dent of circumstance, drinks intemperately because everybody drinks, is sensual because this is a sensual generation, copies Nero in Nero's court, then he belongs truly to the congregation of the damned, who have literally lost their souls. But to have life develop from within, to have the origin and fountainhead of one's living come from deep resources in the soul, that *is* living. And obviously it is only out of such living that one ever becomes a saint in Caesar's household.

Consider once more these saints in Caesar's household. Not only did they take difficult situations for granted and have lives that developed from within, but they allied themselves with whatever saving elements they could find in their environment. Hitherto we have talked about their experience as though it were merely individualistic. No! Saints in Caesar's household—they were plural. They were a group; they stood together. They had a strong fellowship harnessed to the help of their souls, else how could they have stood their ground in Nero's court?

A great teacher of ethics, T. H. Green, said once, "No individual can make a conscience for himself. He always needs a society to make it for him." Surely, that proves its truth in our experience. A man's conscience never is merely or mainly individual. It is always socially created and sustained. In Caesar's household both the Christians on one side and Nero's cronies in debauchery upon the other had consciences socially produced—the debauchees' conscience created by the general society they lived in, the Christians' conscience created by a special society they had deliberately picked out to live in.

How many people do you think are here this morning, accustomed vaguely to talk about being Christian, who need powerfully to be laid hold on by this truth? An individual cannot make a conscience for himself but always needs a society to make it for him. Behind our

artificial and highly organised churches one wishes we could get back to the original idea of a church. *Ecclesia* is the Greek word used in the New Testament for "church," and it means "called out," "selected." It suggests that a man can have a world of his own to live in within the larger world. Out of the hodgepodge and potpourri of the social mass, with its down-drag upon life, a man can choose those saving elements that elevate, purify, and empower the soul. In the fellowship of such selected elements he finds his ecclesia, his church, where his conscience is rekindled and from which he goes out again to face the wrath of devils and the scorn of men. No man ever yet lived a great life without having in that sense of the word a "church."

My soul, think what your ecclesia has done for you! For out of the general mass of the world you have selected some special things for your intimate companionship—the beauty of the green earth by day and the stars by night, great books, great music, great friends, the noblest traditions of the race, its finest faiths, its most illustrious souls, Christ over all. See how out of the mass of life you have chosen your ecclesia. No one can ever live a great life without such a church.

If someone asks what all this has to do with the actual churches, the answer is that the meaning of the actual churches lies in the endeavour to make this experience easy of access, available to all who want it, real, and effective. All organisations fall short of their ideal significance, as courts fall short of ideal justice, but the meaning of a church is this: it tries to help people to have a society within society, a world within the world, an ecclesia of ideas and ideals, of faiths and purposes, of great souls, the noble living and the noble dead, and Christ over all, in whose fellowship they will have some chance of being saints in Caesar's household.

I beg of you, do not let your idea of the church grow stiff and formal. Keep it plastic and vital. Paul did. In prison, where he needed, if ever a man needed it, a world within the world which so dragged him down, he had an ecclesia. He wrote to one friend who was coming from the East, "Bring when thou comest . . . the books, especially the parchments." So the great books of his race were part of his ecclesia. And his friends were part of it, not simply those whom he could see and touch, like "Luke, the beloved physician," but that larger body of Christians across the Empire who kept reminding him that he was not alone but a member of a beloved community to whose ideas the future belonged. And his interior world of thought was part of his ecclesia also. Listen to him there in prison: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." What an ecclesia!

This is too tough a world to try to be Christian in without that. The whole consequence of what we are trying to say this morning will in

many lives depend on just this point. If you go out vaguely expecting as an individual to be a Christian, Caesar's household will get you. You need an ecclesia.

Finally, let us try to satisfy some here who have been discontented. For probably some have been troubled by the fact that what we have been saying seems to leave this wicked world unchanged with merely a few people trying to be Christian within it. That, however, is not the end of the story. Caesar's household was not unchanged. Caesar's household was abolished. As one of the leading scholars of our times has analysed it, the early Christian movement gradually undermined and destroyed the old order of the ancient world by withdrawing the spiritual allegiance of millions of souls from it and giving that allegiance to another set of values altogether. What consequence came out of those saints in Caesar's household almost passes belief.

Two young sisters were disputing about which was the last book of the Bible and one was heard to exclaim to the other, "Barbara, I tell you the Bible does *not* end in Timothy; it ends in Revolutions." History validates the truth thus unwittingly stated, so that none should leave this sanctuary saying that the conclusion of the matter is a few individuals lifted out of the wicked world. Rather, this is the conclusion of the matter, that if this desperately needy world is ever to be saved, with not souls only but the societies of men redeemed to a kingdom of peace and righteousness, there is one indispensable prerequisite for which no substitute will ever be discovered: men and women, namely, who do not wait for Caesar's household to be redeemed before they begin living redeemed lives within it — Christians in spite of everything!

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK:

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JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

1878–1950



JOSEPH FORT NEWTON, photograph, First Baptist Church, Paris, Texas.

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

- 1878 *Born Decatur, Texas, July 21*
1897 *Became pastor of First Baptist Church, Paris, Texas*
1900 *Became pastor of Non-Sectarian Church, St. Louis, Missouri; married Jennie MacDeatherage*
1901 *Became pastor of People's Church, Dixon, Illinois*
1908 *Became pastor of Little Brick Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa*
1916 *Went to City Temple, London, England, as pastor*
1919 *Returned to United States to pastor Church of the Divine Paternity, New York*
1925 *Became pastor of Memorial Church of St. Paul, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*
1930 *Became pastor of St. James's Church, Philadelphia*
1938 *Became pastor of St. Luke and the Epiphany, Philadelphia*
1950 *Died January 24*

"MUST THE CHURCH always be last, riding in an oxcart in a day of express trains?"¹ Joseph Fort Newton wrote these lines in his diary in New York City on March 18, 1921. His life seemed dedicated to pushing the church of the twentieth century into first place in the devotion of the people. In his efforts he moved from one denomination to another. Beginning as a Southern Baptist, he shifted to the Universalists and finished his ministry as a priest in the Episcopal church. Though his denominational affiliations changed, his ambition to make the church relevant to a modern world remained fixed.

1. Joseph Fort Newton, *River of Years* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1946), p. 222. Used by permission.

LIFE AND TIMES

Joseph Fort Newton was born in Decatur, Texas, on July 21, 1878. Sources vary for the year of his birth; *River of Years* lists 1876. Educated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, he began his ministry as a Southern Baptist pastor in Texas. From 1897 to 1898 he served as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Paris, Texas. From Texas he moved to churches in Missouri, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Iowa. Newton emerged suddenly from the pastorate of an inconspicuous church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to a position of world fame. The *Christian Century* later carried this account of Newton's jump from obscurity in Iowa to fame in London:

During the years just before World War I the *Century*—then a struggling denominational paper gleaning its contents at a necessary minimum of cost—discovered that a Cedar Rapids paper was printing sermons by the pastor of a “Liberal Christian” (Universalist) church in that city which were far out of the ordinary. The young pastor gladly permitted the *Century* to print as many of these as it wished. A subscriber in London read and was greatly impressed by them. This subscriber was probably the most active layman in the City Temple, just then, following the departure of Reginald J. Campbell, without a minister. The call to Dr. Newton, which astonished the church world, followed.²

Newton served as minister of City Temple, London, during the tense years of World War I. He won great acclaim in England for his preaching. His fame spread around the world and people of all denominations became interested in his sermons.

In 1919 he returned to the United States to pastor the Church of the Divine Paternity in New York City. Back in his home country, his pulpit eloquence failed to impress as much as it once had. In the chaotic years following the war, preaching required a special toughness to be heard. Newton's sermons seemed to lack the necessary sharpness. In 1925 he moved from New York to Philadelphia to become pastor of the Memorial Church of St. Paul. He remained in Philadelphia until his death in 1950, pastoring the St. James's and St. Luke's churches.

2. *The Christian Century*, 8 February 1950, p. 165. Copyright 1950 Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission.

In 1944 he began a newspaper column called "Everyday Religion" which was carried throughout the United States. In this popular religious column he answered questions submitted to him by his readers. This newspaper work again won for him a wide audience and helped, as he put it, to bring his preaching into contact with the real problems of people.

Joseph Fort Newton combined several unusual qualities: he advocated mysticism; he deplored division among denominations and advocated an ecumenical approach to Christianity; he was a conservative on most political, social, and theological issues. Yet he displayed a consistent concern for social issues and a desire to relate the Christian faith to the ills of men and society.

His concern for the church ran deep. At times he became distressed and felt that he would leave the institutional church—but he never did. He realized that his place was in the church and he was deeply committed to it. In his autobiography he recorded his feelings:

Indeed, for a time I was in dire plight in respect to the Church as I knew it, wondering whether I could go on in its service. The Church called me with many voices, and every voice a memory and a command; but it looked as if the church—spelled with a small "c"—broken and in disarray, were standing in the way of the real Church, the fellowship of the seekers and finders of God.

It was hard to think of leaving the Church, and equally hard to remain in it, though I was at home in every sect and able to speak the dialect of each, because my solitary concern was with what they held in common. Unhappy, ill at ease, I was looking and longing for the Church of Christ, who never laid stress on a petty, picayunish issue in His life. My case was much like that of the old New England deacon who was excommunicated by his church, but refused to go out. For twenty-five years he came to every communion service, bringing a bit of bread and a sip of wine of his own. There, in the privacy of his high pew, he communed with the Church when the Church would not commune with him. When a man brings his own communion, who can say nay?

In the same forlorn way, I still clung to the Church as the family of God, albeit a house divided against itself, while it majored in minor issues of no importance,

when its methods were archaic and ineffective, and its theology was a museum of faded antiques, because there was nowhere else to go.³

In his efforts to relate the church to life in ministry and preaching, Newton remained basically a conservative. He deplored the wild and radical ways of the youth around him. He sympathized with their feelings and yet could not identify with them. Liberal politics and economics gained no strong endorsement from him. In his diary he records an occasion in 1921 when he went to hear a socialist lecture. He was unimpressed. He insisted that the goal of socialism, like that of capitalism, was materialism. He longed for another and better way, one which emphasized human rights and dignity on a spiritual plane far above the materialistic.

His concern for personal morality and social issues was broad. On war he took a middle-of-the-road position—but he did take a position. During World War I he was pastor in City Temple in London. Of his experience as pastor in a war-torn country he said:

For one thing, I was unable to take the pacifist position that all war is always wrong, and that war never settles anything. . . . Some wars are right, some are wrong, and others are mixed. To say that all wars are wrong shows a lack of moral insight—for a people to defend their homes when attacked cannot be wrong. . . .

Force, as such, is neither moral nor immoral; it is how we use force, and for what purpose, that counts. . . . A pacifist, if he does not help his country, helps the enemy—he cannot keep out of war. If he wishes to take insult and injustice without resentment, in obedience to the words of Jesus, it is his right, and he is wise.⁴

Two years following the war, back in his native country, Newton reflected the pacifist sentiment rising among ministers in the United States. In his diary he wrote:

Armistice Day, and what memories it evokes! They are gone, those years, dark, senseless, and confused—like the hideous shapes of some strange, horrible dream. It seems a century; and what did it come to? After two

3. Newton, p. 80.

4. Ibid., p. 135.

years we are just where we were, with no assurance that a like calamity will not befall us again. Did nothing happen to us in the night? Apparently not; everything seems to be the same as usual, only more so. . . . Another such war and the scraggly chaos we call civilisation will disappear; but we have no time to bother about it.⁵

Again and again his sermons and writings reflect his compassion for the downtrodden. On one occasion, having examined a ministry for the defeated masses of the city, he wrote that it was like reading an old page from the gospels or a new chapter from the Acts of the Apostles. His concern for social issues expressed itself in more ways than words, however. Once, while pastor in Dixon, Illinois, he became involved in a campaign to oust injustice from the town. He challenged the ruling political party that favored the liquor traffic and vice. He preached sermons on the situation, and the gang in power threatened to discredit and destroy him; in retaliation Newton organized a Law and Order League. The League employed a detective to spend two weeks gathering evidence. After the evidence was gathered, Newton and his League spread the information about the town. He describes the results in his autobiography:

The result was astonishing; it well-nigh depopulated the town of its men. Many men, never suspected of doing anything illegal, had business elsewhere for an indefinite time. The house of ill-fame went out of business quickly . . . at the next election the whole "gang" was swept away like cobwebs. The mayor tried to "beat me to a pulp," but he was too angry to know what he was doing—I caught him by the arms and held him.⁶

Although he was famous as a preacher, Newton declined to do the Yale Lectures on Preaching. Yet he left a remarkable book, *The New Preaching*, which describes his concept of life, ministry, and preaching. He believed that Christians should be concerned about broad issues, not narrow sectarian differences. He insisted that both personal piety and social action were important. He stood firm for the necessity of mystical faith as well as the just use of the skills of science. In brief, he blended the old and the new in religion and preaching.

5. Joseph Fort Newton, *Preaching in New York* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1924), p. 82.

6. Newton, *River of Years*, p. 101.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

The sermons of Joseph Fort Newton are chiefly distinguished by their style. He was neither an original thinker nor a great expositor of Scripture, though at times his sermons show both qualities. In his heyday Newton was probably the most admired preacher in the world, principally because of his style. But he came at the end of an age of oratory and never quite escaped it.

His sermons in London were more appreciated than his later ones in New York or Philadelphia. Times were changing. Technically, his later sermons are just as good as his earlier ones, but Newton happened to represent a style that was quickly losing favor. New preachers were emerging on the scene, preachers whose style was entirely the opposite of Newton's. In England, Studdert Kennedy and Dick Sheppard were beginning to catch the nation's fancy with a style better suited to the Roaring Twenties, a style as different from that of Joseph Fort Newton as the style of Van Gogh from that of Rembrandt. In New York, Harry Emerson Fosdick began to capture the attention of the same generation on the other side of the Atlantic.

In 1927 Lynn Harold Hough wrote a book entitled *Adventures in the Minds of Men* in which he compared Newton and Fosdick. His evaluation is favorable to Newton; nonetheless, even in his praise Hough gives a clear indication why Fosdick appealed to the younger generation and Newton did not:

In the work of Dr. Fosdick there is none of that mellowness, that ripe grace of expression which gives such charm to the work of the author of *Preaching in New York*. Dr. Fosdick is often wonderfully brilliant. And he is magnificently alive. But he has not been alive very long. In some of his deepest moods Dr. Fort Newton makes you feel as if, like the sphinx, he has seen the whole pageant of the ages and through centuries of meditation has grown wise.

Dr. Fosdick finds the keen phrase. Dr. Fort Newton finds the haunting phrase. Dr. Fosdick's writing makes you think of linen of the very best and most durable quality. Dr. Fort Newton makes you think of rare old satin with here and there a touch of royally beautiful brocade.⁷

7. Lynn Harold Hough, *Adventures in the Minds of Men* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1927), p. 60. Used by permission.

In an age when “royally beautiful brocade” had already gone out of style and “rare old satin” could find no place in modern homes, the preaching of Newton was gradually eclipsed. On the other hand, Fosdick was able to progress with a generation that would soon leave far behind “linen . . . of the most durable quality” and move on to newer, even more durable fabrics.

Nevertheless, in fairness to Newton he must not be misunderstood: many of his ideas were regarded as radical in his day; some of them are still radical today. Although he was basically conservative in his theology, his ecclesiology was broad and liberal. He was not a preacher of the “social gospel” as such, but his concern with poverty and government reveal a man actively involved with critical issues. If his voice did not speak with the sharpness that the modern generation demanded, at least it spoke, and spoke faithfully.

In homiletical thinking Newton was just as revolutionary. He did not believe in writing out a full manuscript, nor preaching from one as his style of oratory might suggest. In fact, one of the reasons for his fame was his ability to speak classic sentences of poetic style, abundantly illustrated from literature, without the use of notes. He wrote his sermons only after they were delivered. He was not intoxicated with words; he believed that style amounted to more than well-turned phrases:

Style is the man, the accent of his mind, the gesture of his soul. It is more than a mastery of the weight, worth, color and music of words, it is a blending of words which turns sounds into song.⁸

In 1933 Edgar DeWitt Jones analyzed thirty-two American preachers and wrote: “I am inclined to believe that through twenty years Dr. Newton has been a more prolific producer of high-class sermons than any other preacher of the period.”⁹ In Jones’s description of Newton’s ability with language, again it is easy to understand why his style was once admired more than any other living preacher—and yet eventually faded from favor:

8. Newton, *River of Years*, p. 69.

9. Edgar DeWitt Jones, *American Preachers of To-Day*, p. 241. Copyright, 1933, by The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., reprinted by permission of the publishers.

Dr. Newton is a lord of language, the master of a distinctive style. The literary quality of his sermons is opulent, and though saturated with the fragrance of belles-lettres is nevertheless marked by restraint. There is a suggestion in his style of Cardinal Newman, in serenity and purity, but it is much more alive and colorful than that of the renowned author of *Lead, Kindly Light*. If Dr. Newton has ever published a sermon or written a chapter in any of his numerous volumes that is marred by carelessness or unhappy phrasings, I have not come across it. . . . As a preacher he is a rare combination of the mystic, the teacher and the prophet.¹⁰

And Newton was a prophet—not so much in the realm of social action, as many others of his time—but in prophesying the direction that preaching should take. His insights into the needs of preaching for the new age are nothing less than prophetic; the best of modern preaching conforms exactly to his formula. For example, as early as 1930 Newton advocated “talk-back” sessions after the sermon; preaching in “picture-language” to a movie-conscious age; preaching *inductively* rather than *deductively*—putting the text last rather than first in the sermon, so that people will not be put off by the authoritarian approach; combining social ideals in preaching with a mystical inner faith. Only a few writers on homiletics in his day grasped any of these concepts, and no one else described all of them.

In his book on preaching Newton described these principles in a chapter entitled “The New Strategy.” He gave examples from his experience with talk-back sessions with the troops in army camps during World War I, and highly recommended the value of such sessions. He insisted that much modern preaching was unintelligible and unrelated to modern life. He believed that expository preaching, for the most part, had seen its day: “For one thing, it makes expository preaching, so fruitful in other days, well nigh impossible, or at least in America, where life moves to the rhythm of motors, movies, and jazz.”¹¹ In its place Newton recommended picture-preaching: “Obviously, if we are to preach to the motion picture mind, we must preach in pictures, as Beecher trained himself to do, making his sermons picture-galleries of the gospel. . . .”¹²

10. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

11. Joseph Fort Newton, *The New Preaching* (London: SCM Press, n.d.), p. 116.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

Newton's most creative contribution to preaching was his suggestion that preaching should be inductive rather than deductive:

In the old days the text was a truth assumed to be true, and the preacher only needed to expound its meaning, deduce its lessons and apply them. . . . Of course, the old formula, "the Bible teaches, therefore it is true; the Church affirms, therefore it is valid," is still sufficient for those who accept such authorities. But in an age of inquiry, when the authority of the Bible and the Church is questioned by so many, such an appeal does not carry conviction. We may wish it otherwise, but we must face the facts. . . .¹³

Newton recommended an approach that established truth in the minds of the hearers by a series of illustrations, only then progressing to the authority of the Scripture: "By the inductive approach it is different; it puts no weight on the text at first, but begins with near-by facts familiar to all, using popular illustrations. . . . 'Why this is true!' is the unspoken verdict; the truth of the text is approved, not only as upon divine authority, but as a truth of experience."¹⁴

Newton insisted that the method of Jesus was "distinctly inductive":

Instead, he began with facts from the life around him, and these were presented with exquisite art, converging upon his main thesis. . . . It is to be noted that he always used this method in speaking to the stranger, the doubter, and the sinner, and since he has done more good than all of us put together, it behooves us to follow his lead.¹⁵

Newton was one of the first to insist that social preaching must be accompanied by an emphasis on private piety, and that individual religion must likewise be expanded into social concerns:

It remains to point out that the new preaching will not be content with the culture of a private piety. It will be

13. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.

the prophet, no less, of public religion, not only social in its insight, but international in its aspiration. Just now we are between two eras, when the old individualism has shown itself to be clearly inadequate and the wider social mind has not fully come. . . .

Here, then, is a challenge to the new preaching: to unite once more what God has joined together and man has put asunder, making two mighty forces friends, as they must be. For, manifestly, if great social ideals are ever to be realized, it must be by the power of a mystical faith using the facts and skill of science to organize a fraternal righteousness upon earth.¹⁶

Joseph Fort Newton's concepts of preaching deserve careful attention from contemporary preachers. If his sermons do not quite speak to the age, his philosophy of preaching definitely does. And yet it is strangely ironical, and even a little sad, that a preacher who was so right in his thinking about preaching, so prophetic in his insight into the new age, should have been eclipsed by it.

He titled his book *The New Preaching*: he understood it better than anyone in his age—but he never quite mastered it. He was the last of the older orators, and the first of the newer prophets of preaching. In Newton, preaching left one century and entered a new one.

16. Ibid., pp. 136, 144.

Sermons

WHAT GOD HATH NOT JOINED

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6).

THE PROBLEM OF DIVORCE, at all times so perplexing, has become acute in recent years. Tendencies too many to discuss have made it so. The mood and temper of the age, its yeasty unrest, its enfeebled spiritual authority, its shifting moral sanctions, its increasing economic pressure, the larger sphere and new demands of woman, the revolt against the standards of the last generation, with much else added, make the question complex and baffling. Even before the Great War the facts were disquieting enough; and since its close, the riot of divorce has become almost an orgy, aggravated, no doubt, by the erotic legacy which the war left us. In England, where the public mind is more exacting, conditions are said to be worse than with us, until many fear that we are infected with the virus which undermined the ancient societies.

None the less, it is very easy to see the problem out of all proportion, and to become unduly alarmed by it. The glass of modern fiction reflects the facts, but in an exaggerated form, by bringing them to a focus and leaving other facts out of the picture. In a recent popular novel, called *Brass*, of five marriages studied, only one is endurable. It recalled a similar but much stronger story written some years ago, *Double Harness*, by Anthony Hope, to read which tempted one to conclude that marriage is what war is declared to be. The story is told with a brilliantly sinister power and acumen of soul-vivisection, in which worldly wisdom is salted with acrid wit, albeit touched, toward the end, with pity; showing what a ghastly thing marriage may be in the hands of fools and self-lovers, in whom a swinish sensuality is joined with an appalling shallowness of soul. Both books are patches of perdition; but no one in his senses thinks of taking either as a picture of married life. Happily, so far at least, in spite of all the ado made about it, divorce, in proportion to marriage, is the rare exception, which puts the rule of the goodness of marriage to the test, and proves it.

Reprinted from Joseph Fort Newton, *God and the Golden Rule* (New York: Century Co., 1927), pp. 160-73. Used by permission of Meredith Press.

How to conserve both the values of the individual and the hard-won inheritance of the race makes the real problem, of which divorce is only one phase. That is, among right-thinking people it is so. As for the pusillanimous set of moral parasites, who pollute what they touch and pervert what they enjoy, a way can be found to deal with them as they deserve. More deadly by far is the subtle and pervasive cynicism in regard to marriage in our day. Much of our later fiction deals with it, not only lightly, but flippantly, and at times sordidly, with seldom a gleam of moral insight or spiritual vision, as if marriage had become a bondage from which to secure release.

So, often, it is, because one or both of the parties to it are held in slavery, not by marriage, but by some dark inner bondage of soul. The non-moral society portrayed in *The Glimpses of the Moon*, by Edith Wharton, is typical of wide areas of modern life, including the precious pair of dead-beats whose story it tells; but one touch makes us pause.

The little girl wound her arms about Susy's neck and leaned against her caressingly.

"Are you going to be, soon, then? I'll promise not to tell if you don't want me to."

"Going to be divorced? Of course not! What in the world made you think so?"

"Because you look so awfully happy," said Clarissa Vanderlyn simply.

Such precocious cynicism in the nursery fills one with dismay, in that it poisons the springs of life. Nor is it so rare as some imagine, in an age when the hardships of virtue are an argument for lenity to vice, and the difficulty of duty is a reason for shirking it. Living in an air of indulgence, we are soft, flabby, and morally short of wind. If a thing is disagreeable, we do not do it. Homes are wrecked, social life is undermined, and children are sent adrift, because, forsooth, "I was unhappy"; just as in business life statutes are broken and moral principles disregarded, because "a man must get ahead." Trace almost any of our ills to its source, and its roots will be found in our worship of success, our cult of comfort, our quest of a "good time," our selfish love of the easy way, which turns out in the end to be a path of flame!

No wonder jurists, educators, publicists, and churchmen alike are puzzled, not alone by the spirit and facts of the time, but by a disinclination to face the facts squarely and think the issues through. Even among teachers of the finest moral insight, there is the widest diversity of judgment. At one end is Dr. Felix Adler, who will not allow divorce for any cause whatever, not even for infidelity to the marriage vow; though he will agree to separation, if conditions are intolerable. At the other end is Mr. Louis Post, who holds that any one who asks for a divorce ought to have it; because such a request shows that real marriage, if it ever existed, is dead and ought to be buried. Between

the two extremes, we find a long gamut of opinion, all the way from the sacramentarian to the libertarian, making the solution as much a medley as the problem. Meanwhile the church, when it does not actually evade the issue, falls back upon an ancient formula of doubtful exegesis, or else spends its time debating whether the word "obey" should be retained in the marriage rite!

It is indeed strange. At a time when we hear so much about the Social Gospel, no one seems able or willing to show us how a spiritual religion can cleanse, enlighten, and consecrate the relations of the sexes, which are the foundations of the social order. There is sore need of clear thinking and plain speaking on a cluster of questions—sex, marriage, birth-control, divorce—which we dare not much longer ignore. My former colleague at the City Temple, in her series of addresses, *Sex and Common Sense*, is almost the only one who has dared to deal with such issues. Miss Royden has spoken as the situation demands, frankly and without fear, reverently and with a wise charity. It is in accord with the fitness of things that the greatest woman preacher of our time should render this service, giving the woman's point of view in respect of questions on which women have been too long silent. Every page of her book is aglow with human sympathy and spiritual vision, as she seeks the truth in the light of the facts of life and the mind of Jesus.

For, whatever theology we may hold, not one of us but is ill at ease in his mind if he feels that Jesus is on the other side of any question. Nor is his teaching at all obscure, if we remember that he was a light-bringer and not a mere lawgiver. Those who read his words about divorce as literal law ought, in all honesty, to interpret his other teachings in the same manner; for example, his words about selling all our goods and giving to the poor, and his injunction to non-resistance. It is odd to find men so literal on one point and so liberal on others. The spectacle of cruelty or cowardice masquerading in the guise of orthodox exegesis is familiar enough. Plainly, if we really want to know the meaning of any precept of Jesus, we must read it in the context and atmosphere of his teaching as a whole; in the free, sane, exalted light of his mind. Nay, more; we must be ready for daring adventure if we mean to follow his truth and make trial of his way of life.

As on so many other subjects, Jesus left nothing really new to be said about marriage and divorce, if we keep in mind his revolutionary attitude toward woman. To a captious question from his critics, he made reply, lifting the whole subject out of the mire into a higher air, where marriage is a permanent union, and a lustful look is adultery. Neither ascetic nor eugenist, free equally from prudishness and laxity, Jesus saw the fact of sex for what it is. With him, marriage, like the Sabbath day, is made for man, not man for marriage. Sex is secondary. Woman, in his thought, is not primarily an instrument of sex, nor even a potential mother. She is not first of all a woman, but a human soul of incomputable value and sanctity, to degrade whom is desecra-

tion. Therefore, to "look upon" her merely as an object of desire is a degradation of personality and a treason against God. Thus, in a world of putrid impurity, Jesus set forth his ideal of the new social order that he sought to found, in which all the facts of life are holy, and all its fellowships happy. To such a life his disciples are called, and for the man who lives in his truth and follows in his way there is no problem of divorce at all, since the Spirit of Christ forgives even the ultimate infidelity—as he himself did in the court of the Temple.

What all this means in marriage is made vivid by a story told me in the North of England, of a man whose wife, soon after her marriage, fell into vicious ways, and went from bad to worse. One evening he came home to find, as he had often found before, that she had gone on a new debauch. He knew only too well in what plight she would return, after two or three days of a nameless life. In an empty and cheerless house he sat down to look the fact in the face, the better to learn what he must do. The worst had happened too many times to leave him any hope, and he saw what lay before him. The words of the marriage rite, "for better, for worse," had now a terrible meaning; but he reaffirmed his vow on his knees. When a friend who knew the facts ventured to commiserate him, he answered, "Not a word!" His wife did not mend her ways, but died in his house some years later, a poor wreck, sunken in shame, with his hands spread over her in pity and prayer! Such is the Christian way of dealing with a tragic marriage; and before we use the words of Jesus as stones to throw at others, it behooves us to look into our own hearts.

Judged by the real spirit and purpose of Jesus, the attitude of the church to-day in respect to marriage is untenable. Few of the marriages "solemnized" in our churches are Christian in any sense, since many of those so married do not even profess Christian faith, much less try to live by it. At best, many are only nominal Christians, and as often as otherwise they have not been instructed as to what Christian marriage means. Yet they receive the blessing of the church, and, by implication at least, are expected to live by its vows. It is nothing short of absurd. Indeed it is open to debate whether it is right to impose an ideal, meant to apply only to followers of Christ, as a law upon those who do not take upon themselves the obligations of his faith. In fact, the only honest thing for the church to do is, either to distinguish between Christian marriage and common marriage, or else to refuse to be a party to any marriage except between those who make avowal of Christian principles; and then to insist that such a union is indissoluble by default of either party. By so doing it will lose in popularity, but it will gain in self-respect; and by being in line with the teaching of Jesus, it may the better hope to do by conversion what it fails to do by coercion. For coercion it is, whether the ideal of Jesus be written into a law, or enforced by social pressure.

Now, consider. In the world as it is—which Keats calls “a vale of soul-making”—where the Kingdom of Heaven often seems like a visionary scene suspended in the sky, there are all kinds of folk, of all grades of mind, character, and condition; refined, vulgar, clever, stupid, and neutral. People marry for their own reasons, or for none that any one can discover; and many of them are not fit for marriage at all, unworthy of its sanctity and incapable of its high demands. Mistakes are inevitable. Hasty, ill considered, foolish marriages are made every day, foredoomed to failure. All kinds are braided together in marriage—the degenerate, the diseased, the abnormal, the criminal, the *roué*, those of unbalanced minds and tainted blood—many whose union can mean nothing but tragedy, and whose parenthood is a social disaster. In such a world, as he who has eyes must see, divorce, in one form or another, is a necessity, if not a commandment.

Those whom God has joined together are not lightly to be put asunder; but there are those whom God has not joined together. It needs no insight to see that there are cases where to continue the marriage relation is a deeper affront to morality and public order than any divorce could be. There are conditions of degeneracy, of infidelity, of malicious perversion of all that is holy in the marriage vow, killing not only love but respect, and dissolving any real union by automatic process. There are malignities of disposition, outrages against personality, mordant hostilities, and cruelties of behavior far worse in their erosive and blighting destructiveness than any brutality of physical violence, or any deflection from the fidelities of wedlock. Such marriages are a lie, and if we really desire truth and purity, some way must be devised to heal these social cankers. One hesitates to describe the attitude of those who seem to prefer regularity to reality, and are willing to tolerate any horror so long as it is hidden under the smooth surface of society.

Nor is divorce by any means an unmixed evil. So far from being an attack on marriage, it is in fact an attempt to protect its sanctity and preserve its permanence. When allowance is made for every kind of abuse, from which nothing human is exempt, if there are moral reasons against divorce, so there are moral reasons in favor of it. This at least is true: the sanctity of marriage lies in a sacred union of hearts, which the church may bless and the state make legal, but which neither can create or annul. Where love is, there marriage is; where love is not, marriage has ceased to be. For marriage to go on when love is dead puts before us a situation which, if described for what it is, would require the use of words that cut like whips of fire. If a loveless marriage is chaste just because it is legal, then chastity is a thing of rite and rote, an empty form and not a principle of purity at all. No wonder the late Lord Bryce once said that the morality of a country is not to be measured by the number of divorces, but as often as not the

other way round. Its condition may be really worse if its people cynically allow their social life to rest upon anything less noble than the bond of moral love, which alone can make it holy and enduring.

Often enough divorce is silly, sad, nauseating, and in other ways afflictive of the community. Often, too, it may be a greater mistake than marriage, and it carries penalties of its own known only to those who have had to face it. Either way it is a tragedy for the child, who is the most pitiful figure in the plot, whether he is bereft of one parent, or doomed to live in a home where love is only a memory. Instead of being the sybaritic luxury so many people think it is, its victims are in fact sacrifices, more or less involuntary, to the general good. It may have the value of a horrible example, to deter others from rushing into a marriage of fancy or of worldly station. Its glaring publicity, its hideous revelations—ridiculous when not disgusting—are not things to be invited. At best, divorce is a clinic, a piece of social surgery attempting to salvage the wreck of marriages which are manifestly mistakes, if not tragedies. Anyway it will go on, until we find some better way whereby a marriage may be ended legally, when it has already been ended morally.

To discuss what should be the law of the land in the matter of divorce is beyond my competence. Still, all must agree that in the social control of marriage, as of anything else, law must be an embodiment of the living will of the people, and not merely the stony grip of the dead hand of the past. The South Carolina law, which refuses to allow divorce on any ground, is clearly the expression of a tradition, rather than the voice of to-day; more the sentiment of a proud and conservative past, than a legal aid to the social morality of the present. The ideal of home life in the State is of a high order, but not more so than in other States of the South, where divorce is permitted. Nor does the law seem to apply with equal rigidity to the black folk, among whom marital irregularities are quite common. Even so, it is easily evaded by setting up a legal residence elsewhere, before returning to the State to live. For all these reasons, the law is hardly a case in point; but it does serve to show how the developing moral judgment of a community may be thwarted, if not arrested.

For a better example of the workings of a rigid law—albeit not so stern, in that it allows divorce for infidelity—we must go to England, as revealed in the Rutherford case recently decided. The man was a brute from the first and all along, ending his career by a foul murder, for which he escaped execution on plea of insanity, which was no doubt justified. Years passed, and the wife sought divorce on grounds of adultery—proved at the first trial, but later dismissed—and her petition was accordingly denied. Had the man not been a lunatic, he would have been executed, and the wife would now be free. Because he is insane, she must remain, in law, his wife—tied to a dead body, with no hope of release. Here is a marriage of no value to society, much

less to the parties to it, since no one argues that they should live together, even if it were possible. Why should not the woman have her liberty and the right to remarry if she so desires? If it be true that hard cases make bad law it is equally true that bad law makes hard cases; and an injustice so atrocious ought to move even a staid people to mitigate the severity of a law which is neither just nor merciful.

About all that we need ask of the law is that it set up a safeguard, as much against a rigid cruelty as against the laxity which makes possible the consecutive polygamy so often flaunted in our faces by moral morons. So much is plain; but beyond that the law cannot go very far. My own feeling is that the less detailed the law is, the wiser it will be, provided we institute special courts for the purpose, in which both men and women shall sit as judges, where issues as difficult as they are delicate may be dealt with in a manner worthy of their solemnity. Such courts, it need hardly be added, should have the sanctity and privacy of a confessional; and between the application for a divorce and the granting of it, there should be a pause of time for reconsideration, to guard against rashness and action taken in haste. In the most favorable environment, it is never easy for an outsider to pass on the conditions which make a marriage intolerable. Often a mere trifle may be the last straw on a burden of misery or indignity carried for years, making it unbearable. At any rate, as we dare not be satisfied with the present system, if we cannot devise a better plan, we deserve to live under a menace.

A rather wide pastoral experience, on both sides of the sea, has ripened some thoughts into conviction. For one thing, he will look in vain who hopes to find a simple solution of this sadly tangled problem; it does not exist. Each case of unhappy marriage stands by itself, and must be judged by its own facts, which refuse to fit into any glib formula. For that reason, a rigid and detailed law as to the grounds for divorce in all cases, without regard to the human equation in each case, works frightful cruelty and injustice. But much can be done without law. In England, during the last year of the war, and the awful year of moral collapse following it, when men were returning to their homes after years of absence, conditions were appalling. My study at the City Temple was a confessional, in which tales were told that made the heart sick, revealing the weakness of poor human nature, its dark dishonor, its selfish sin. Yet even then, as before and since, often in cases where divorce might have been legally obtained, it was possible, by tact, by moral suasion, by sheer love of young lives astray, to reawaken love, adjust disputes, and save homes from ruin.

After all, divorce is the dark end of the problem; the real remedy lies in making marriage a nobler and finer thing than it is. The whole conception of the relation of the sexes must be lifted to a higher level, and interpreted by moral intelligence and spiritual vision, in the light of human realities and social values. For the moment, a revolt against

the prudishness of a former time has swept too far toward a frankness that is not modest, and a liberty hard to know from license. None the less, out of the agitation of our times a clearer insight will emerge, and a finer fellowship in marriage; but not without bitter suffering, much of which might be averted in individual cases by very simple arts. For the most part, it is what workmen call "an inside job"; and until we have learned to live with ourselves and keep the peace, we may not hope to live with another without friction.

THE INN OF YEAR'S END

"Ye have not passed this way heretofore" (Joshua 3:4).

IN THE POETRY of all peoples, as far back as we can go, life is a journey and man is a traveler. These old images of speech are like the vases dug up from the Pyramids, carved with exquisite care, telling us what those who went before us found life to be. Pilgrims we are, members of a pilgrim race, and each of the Seven Ages is neighbor to the rest, like the Canterbury Pilgrims of whom Chaucer wrote, travelers telling tales to beguile the tedium of the journey. It is a long road on which we journey together; but there are Inns along the way, kept by Father Time, in which we may take lodging for the night, and rest and reflect—like the Inn of Year's End, where we arrive to-day, in which there are cakes and ale, a merry company, and much talk of the meaning of the journey and the incidents along the way.

Ten years ago a great editor, now fallen asleep, sent me this greeting at New Year: "Here is hoping that in the New Year there will be nothing the matter with you that money cannot cure. For the rest, the law and prophets contain no word of better rule than this: Hope thou a little, fear not at all, and love as much as you can." To make his wisdom complete, he added these lines from an unpublished manuscript of Stevenson, who was a good traveler and the best of company:

Reprinted from Joseph Fort Newton, *God and the Golden Rule* (New York: Century Co., 1927), pp. 215-25. Used by permission of Meredith Press.

Away with funeral music—set
The pipe to powerful lips—
The cup of life's for him that drinks,
And not for him that sips.

It was a wise wish, since the things which money cannot cure are the ills of the spirit, the sickness of the heart, and the dreary dull pain of waiting for those who return no more. There are hungers which gold cannot satisfy, and blinding storms from which it offers no shelter. Thus bravely, blithely, and with a gallant spirit my vanished friend sent me a heartful of good-will, as we gathered in the friendly Inn of Year's End.

Yes, man is a traveler, and the winding road is ever the symbol of his life. Once we are aware of ourselves as pilgrims on a journey, then the people and the scenes about us reveal their real meaning and charm. Indeed, if we forget that life is a Pilgrim's Progress, we have no clue at all to an understanding of it. For, strangely enough, when we settle down to be citizens of this world, the world itself becomes an enigma and a riddle. By the same token, the great leaders and interpreters of life are the men in whom the sense of being pilgrims and strangers in the earth is the most vivid. It is the sojourners in the world, the manifest travelers to a Better Country, who get the most out of life, because they never forget the adventure of faith and crusade of love. They quicken the divine wanderlust in the souls of us, keeping us from trying to build houses of granite when we only have time to pitch a tent. They are the great toilers too, since they know that they must work while it is day, ere the night cometh when no man can work. In the kindly air of the Inn of Year's End, where men make merry for a night, there is much congratulation upon so much of the journey safely done, and much well-wishing for the way that lies ahead. Also, there is no end of complaint—folk telling of aches, ills, upsets and downfalls. All kinds of faiths and philosophies mingle, and there is no agreement as to the meaning or the goal of the journey. Some think it is a great adventure, and others hold it to be a nuisance. Often one feels that it takes half of the race to keep the other half reconciled to the road. Some time ago I read a little *Book of Wisdom* gleaned from the sayings of sages, and it struck me how few had anything good to say about life. Not a few agreed with the epitaph of the poet Gay in Westminster Abbey:

Life is a jest, and all things show it
I thought so once, and now I know it.

Many have thought it a rather bitter jest, as if Fate were toying with us, making sport of our frailty. But if it is a jest, whose jest is it? Only a few accept life as a great gift, a divine opportunity, a capacity for

heroic endeavor. Most men endure life rather than enjoy it, and only rare souls accept it in triumph, as Meredith did in the words, now to be read in the open marble book on top of the modest slab which marks his grave:

Life is but a little holding,
Lent to do a mighty labor.

Howbeit, all must agree that it simplifies life to know that we are a pilgrim world. When a man starts on a journey he does not take everything with him, but only such things as he really needs. Life is thus largely a matter of discrimination and transportation. To know what to take and what to leave, is one of the finest of arts. It asks for insight, judgment, and a sense of values, and we may well take counsel of the wisest minds. One reason why the race moves so slowly is that it tries to carry too much with it, weighing itself down with old creeds, customs, and no end of useless rubbish which ought to be thrown aside. Much worthless luggage is carted over the hills and valleys of the years, hindering the advance of humanity. Dogma, said Phillips Brooks, is truth packed for transportation. No doubt; but since we need the truth every day, why pack an old dogma and carry it along? It is so in other things. Thoreau was amazed when he saw men staggering along the road with acres of land on their backs, and houses and bags of money. No wonder they are weary. Others carry old hates, old grudges, old disappointments, which wear down their strength for nothing. At the end of the year it is wise to unpack our bundle and sort out the things we do not need — throwing the litter out the window and over the wall.

How much does a man need for his journey? If the wisdom of the ages may be believed, the things we actually need are very few, but they are very great. "There abideth Faith, Hope, and Love, these three; and the greatest of these is Love." To which let us add Courage, the root of every virtue, without which life is either too tame or too terrifying to endure. Wisdom is not enough; a man may have a pocketful of proverbs, but he will lose his way unless, like the Psalmist, he trusts God and makes His laws his songs in the house of his pilgrimage. In a world where the way is often dim, the road rough, and the weather stormy, we have time only for Love, and Hate is the sin of sins. After all, said Michael Fairless, who walked "the Road of the Loving Heart," and ran ahead of us over the hill and out of sight, leaving a golden little book, *The Roadmender* — a manual of daring faith and the wisdom of love:

After all, what do we ask of life, here or indeed hereafter,
but leave to serve, to live, to commune with our fellowmen
and with ourselves; and from the lap of earth to look up into

the face of God? I have learned to understand, dimly, the blessing of a curse, the voice of silence, and the companionship of solitude; and so take my leave of this bit of the road and of you who have fared with me. Farewell! It is a Road-mender's word: I cry you Godspeed to the next milestone—and beyond!

The human procession is endlessly fascinating. It is thronged with figures quaint, fantastic, heroic, ignoble, joyous, sorrowful, ridiculous, pathetic, some marching, some straggling, all wending their way through time. There are Great-Hearts who patrol the road, and skulkers who shirk danger and wander to no purpose; and often we walk with angels unawares. What is the mark whereby we may recognize an angel? asked a mystic of the olden time. He answered his own question by saying that angels may be known by their gracious way of continually saying, "Fear not!" That is, they are always encouragers, and there is nothing our humanity needs more than angels of good cheer. All of us have had chance companions on a journey whom we can never forget, and whom we should love to meet again. Then there are others less admirable, like the tramp I met once in a Western village who lived without aim or obligation—yet with something in him to arrest and amuse. When I asked him if he was a traveler, this is what I heard:

"Yep, headed South this trip; Memphis mebbe, if I don't lay off sooner. I suppose I'm what you call a bum, pardner, but I ain't so bad as some of 'em. Yes, I've been hitting the road for a good while, nigh forty years; but I hold a feller has the right to live the way he wants to as long as he lets other folks alone. No, I haven't any people. That's one reason why I took up this way of livin'. But, see here, I ain't complainin'. I've had a heap more fun than most of 'em. No, I don't booze, at least not lately. I've learned more sense than that. Oh, yes, I might have settled down and got married and raised a lot of kids that I couldn't care for, same as a lot of fellers; but I didn't, and I'm glad I didn't. Pardner, I've been good to my family by not gettin' them into the game. They say kids come from heaven, and I just thought I'd let mine stay there. It keeps me hustlin' to look after myself, and handin' out a bit here and there to some feller down on his luck. Well, so-long, pardner: I hope we'll be meetin' again sometime, but it ain't likely. This world's a pretty big place, but we'll all get through it somehow, don't you reckon?"

Alas, there are many such, more than we imagine, not alone those who flip trains and frequent soup-houses. There are intellectual bums, spiritual tramps, moral parasites who are as aimless and indifferent in regard to the great obligations of life as that wandering loafer. How

often one is reminded of that wise essay by an English country parson, named Boyd—"Alphabet Boyd" they used to call him, because he had so many initials—entitled "Concerning People of Whom More Might Have Been Made." So few make the most of themselves. Hardly any of us, indeed, are what we were designed to be. Why should it be so? Why so much promise, and so little fulfilment? Why did the man with one talent go and hide it? The answer lies in those words, which might be an epitaph for most of our race: "I was afraid!" Fear of life, fear of death, fear of things that never can be, holds us back from being what we can be, what we were meant to be. Most of us are qualified for the leading role in the Gorky story, *The Man Who Was Afraid*. Yet there is nothing to be afraid of, unless it is the very fear that robs life of its glory, darkening our days and dwarfing our powers.

There lies the value of religion, the meaning and strategy of which a wise teacher has summed up after this manner. In every man, in every woman, there is a white-faced coward and a star-eyed hero; they are always at war, and what is sense to one is nonsense to the other. Everything the hero proposes is foolishness to the coward, with whom even God can do nothing at all—except frighten him out of his wits. "Religion is the power which develops the hero in the man at the expense of the coward." At last there comes a day when the coward, with his eye on safety, no longer rules the soul, and that is the day of the feast of life. The hero awakes and looks longingly toward the mountain-tops, no longer fettered to the self-center; and the wings, which Plato said are native to the souls, are spread for flight. Call it conversion, call it what you will, that is the real birthday of the soul—its discovery that though it fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, God is there, as He is everywhere, and everywhere blessed.

When we remember that we are pilgrims seeking a city, we can the better interpret the ills that befall us and the troubles that overtake us along the way. Most of us, however, are poor travelers. Like the people of the Bible, we murmur "because of the way," forgetting that one must put up with a great deal on a journey which would be intolerable at home, and that our griefs are but the incidents and accidents of the road. Our duties, too, are made plain. The Good Samaritan had never met the man whom he befriended on the road to Jericho. He probably did not know his name. As they were of different races, he may have had difficulty in understanding his language. None the less, he ministered to his need, took him to the next inn, paid for his keep, and agreed to pay more if required. He found his duty by the roadside in the ordinary course of his labors; he did it and went on his way. Such is the spirit and chivalry of the old-worn human road, wherein if a man walk faithfully he will come to the White Gate of the House of God. Wesley was a mighty pilgrim, and he has told us that, since we pass this way but once, we ought to do all the good we can, in all ways we

can, to all the people we can. Nothing else really matters, and it makes the joy of these short days of sun and frost.

How many times we have been asked the question by some fellow-traveler, How far are you going? It is a natural question, but always when it is asked me there come thoughts of those who walked with me in other days, and have vanished. They were lovely and true, their fellowship was sweet, and the way has been lonely since they went away. Toward the end life is like the Appian Way—a street of tombs—as one by one those who journey with us fall asleep. What we need is One who is going all the way. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, “Lo, I am with you all the way, even to the end of the world.” He is going all the way, he knows the way, he is the way; and I beseech you to make friends with him—yea, make him the Lord and Leader of your life, that so you may not lose your way amid the fluctuating shadows of this mortal world, nor be bereft of companions when those you love fall asleep. Then you will not be left alone when you come at last, as come you must, to where the winding road, worn by so many feet, dips down into the Valley of Shadows.

Awesome it is to think of this spiritual essence of us, this unseen entity we call the soul, with its treasures of faith and hope and love, and its “thoughts that wander through eternity.” The soul, too, is a pilgrim, and must pass on. Wedded for a brief time to a vesture of clay, it walks lightly or sadly along the great highway, and then betakes itself on an unknown journey. It is strange, a door opens, and the pilgrim soul, set free, makes the great adventure where no path is, following a multitude of those gone before. Have no fear; He who made us pilgrims here will not forsake us, and the way He knoweth. No blind and aimless way the spirit goeth, but to Him who hath set eternity in our hearts and taught us to dream of the eternal life in the midst of time. Such thoughts visit us, such undying faiths and hopes cheer us, gathered in the Inn of Year's End, where we take lodging for the night.

I go mine, thou goest thine;
Many ways we wend,
Many ways and many days,
Ending in one end.

Many a wrong its crowning song,
Many a road and many an Inn;
Far to roam, but only one home
For all the world to win.

“THE SERMON”

“By the foolishness of preaching” (1 Corinthians 1:21).

LUCUS VAN LEYDEN, an early Dutch artist, has a striking little painting entitled “The Sermon,” which is at once a picture and a parable of the preaching office. The intent of the artist has been a topic of debate, since it is hardly possible that he selected the sermon hour in church merely to display a group of portraits, as that would betray a callousness in respect to sacred things. No, either he meant to portray the plight of the preacher in his day, or else to rebuke the attitude of the church toward the sermon, as counting for nothing; or for very little; the service being everything—and of that, chiefly the one act by the priest. At any rate, as has been many times made plain, if the church treats the pulpit with contempt, it is sure to have a contemptible pulpit.

The painting shows us a large church or cathedral, with its pillars and arches, its somber interior in contrast with the bright, sunny world outside, where the tide of events flows by. In the background, far withdrawn, one sees dimly the sanctuary and the high altar, unattended, as if preaching and worship were divorced. In front of the church, in the courtyard, a well-dressed man is distributing food to the sick and needy. Did the artist feel that the church of his day was remote from the people, out of touch with their bitter struggle for bread, forgetting that while man cannot live by bread alone, yet he must have bread for the body as well as for the soul? Often one feels that it is the other way round in our day, when the church is so involved in the life of the world that it has no Bread of God for man.

In the foreground is the nave; there is a service in progress, and it is sermon time. A thin, ascetic priest is bending over the pulpit, with his hands outstretched, preaching very earnestly to a congregation of twenty or thirty, who are arranged in groups; some standing, a few sitting on chairs or stools. It is a languid congregation, not one of whom is looking at the preacher, or apparently paying any attention to what he is saying, except perhaps a few sturdy citizens, one of whom is the artist himself, who are half-listening. The pulpit is an odd affair, just large enough to hold the preacher, and he is slight of figure. Is it a symbol of the narrow restraint imposed upon the pulpit of that day, limiting its teaching to harmless homilies on unearthly things, forcing it to deal with ancient dogmas, or else lose itself in a finespun mysticism which floated like a mist over the heads of the people, and never with living issues of the day? Or had the pulpit itself retreated

into the past and become a mere echo of a faith no longer vital? One can hardly think so, because the preacher is so passionately in earnest. Yet something has removed the preacher from his people, either his fault or their indifference; his figure seems smaller than his hearers, as if he were some way off.

The pulpit is raised a good many feet from the ground by an inadequate stem, like a tub on top of a peg, reached by a rickety ladder with rungs rather far apart; it must have been quite a feat for the preacher to enter it. But the physical handicaps under which the preacher is laboring are as nothing in comparison with the spiritual difficulties which beset him. Men, women and little children are facing every direction but towards the pulpit; all are looking out of the picture at the spectator—all, except the preacher. There are several mothers with babies, and one or two Sisters wearing the big white hoods of an order of nuns. One old lady, with a queer little owlet on her headdress, is deep in sleep, her hands folded. Another woman, with what looks like a huge blue-bottle in her headgear, is dozing quietly. The gesture and expression of the preacher show that he is speaking of things which are realities to him, seeking to share with his hearers the secrets of his soul; yet no one is so much as looking at him. "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed," cried Milton; but the people in the picture do not look up.

Yet the people are there, as they are in our churches, or many or few; some from force of habit, others as a tiresome duty or an act of condescension; and still others, it may be, drawn by some nameless need, seeking what they have been unable to find in any satisfying quantity or quality in life. The sheer marvel of it passes the power of words to describe, if one has eyes to see. Folk of many families, walking many scattered ways—their faces like glimpses of a landscape in the mist, suggesting hidden hills and vales—gather about a pulpit, like doves at the prophet's window. He is a strange man, and no preacher at all, who is not touched with wonder and awe by a company of human souls, knowing the work of God in each lonely heart—a work always going on, always important, as various as the infinite varieties of lives, as urgent as their need, as continuing as night and day. He may not know them, and yet if he looks into his own heart he knows them all, for are they not his kith and kin, with hopes and fears and faiths like his own? They are there to be awakened to awareness of the spiritual world; there to be led and lifted into the higher air of God, where they can see more clearly and find some thread of meaning in their tangled days; there seeking some glint or gleam to glorify the drabness of the common task; there to learn how to live, how to love, how to hope, despite the tramp of heavy years. Ay, though they may not be aware of it, they are there to be baptized with a vision of blessedness and the benediction of beauty.

Surely no man who speaks to his fellow men has a task more taxing,

or more thrilling, than the preacher. As in the congregation in the picture, all sorts of folk attend his ministry: youth with its troubled dreams or its savage cynicism, mid-life with its faded idealism or its hard realism, age with its prophetic faith or its set, gray, apathetic resignation; all types of mind, all degrees of culture, all stages of development—pilgrims at every turn of the human journey. There is no common mind, no common understanding, only a common need, and what will interest some is sure to bore or bewilder others. Yet the preacher must deal with the most elusive issues of faith and the hidden secrets of the inner life, seeking to make intangible realities real, and impalpable values vivid. His message has to do with the most intimate affairs of the human heart—things we say to no one and allow no one to say to us, save in the most confidential friendship—yet the awful privacy of the pulpit not only permits, but invites, the closest touch of soul upon soul, and the opening of heart to heart. Truly no other form of speech known among men asks for such delicacy of insight and acumen, such exquisite tact, taste, and tenderness of understanding.

No wonder a great council of the church affirmed that preaching is a sacrament, as in very truth it is, despite its failings. By the same token, to belittle it, much less to ignore it—pushing it off to one side, as in the picture—is nothing short of sacrilege. The office of the ministry is sacramental, and as such it belongs to a man by virtue not only of his temperament, his poetic gift and his passion for humanity, but also, and much more, by his heroic quest of holiness. It is a creative office, in that it has to do with those facts in which men set their faith and in which they find the truth, fashioning the stuff of life into shapes of moral beauty. It is the unveiling of spiritual experience in an illuminated life, bringing healing to the old hurt and heartache of man, and light to those in darkness. By as much as the soul of the preacher is ennobled and made transparent by discipline, by devotion, by daring adventures of faith, by so much does he serve his high calling. The test of any sermon is not its eloquence, not its learning, nor yet its artistry, but the regenerative note that is in it, conveying the living word of God to living men, through a tender, triumphant, ministrant love. O my soul, remember!

When one looks more closely at the pulpit in the picture, one sees no reading-desk, not even a ledge on which to lay a Bible, a breviary, or a sermon, or so much as a sheet of notes. If only it were so everywhere; for surely if a preacher cannot remember his sermon long enough to preach it, nobody will remember it long after it is preached. At least the preacher in the picture is not reading from a manuscript; he is too earnest, too eager—his heart is on fire. No doubt his sermon has been thought out—or, better still, wrought out—in his heart, but he is speaking with the directness and freedom of a man on the hustings. Often one half wishes that it were impossible for a sermon to be read, if only

the preacher might be set free to look his people in the eyes, and talk of things he knows too well to forget; might feel the pull and play of soul upon soul and know the revelation of a united yearning for the Reality, to which all are aspiring. Such preaching is talking about God—nay, with God—in company with those who are longing to be aware of him, and of one another in his presence, as simply, as naturally, and as intimately as one talks with a friend. If it makes the sermon less a product of one mind than the fruit of fellowship, in which many share, it also makes it a Holy Communion of seeking souls in quest of him who is the end of all desire, and the one beauty we were sent to seek.

In 1720 the Church of Scotland, in its assembly, declared the reading of sermons to be displeasing to the people of God and an obstruction to the gospel. If there are exceptions to the rule, as all admit, they only prove the rule. With which agrees the wisdom of the Church of Rome in training its orders of preaching friars, many of whom are among the noblest preachers of our day. Those who have heard any of the great dominicans of our generation, in Paris or elsewhere, can testify to the rush and freedom and fire of their sermons. There is no flowery emptiness in their preaching, no vapory rhetoric, no pious pap. They speak as men who are looking straight at the truth and telling it vividly, without sacrificing either candor or caution. Ever and again, by the mercy of God, a man appears who is neither fluent nor fiery, whose eloquence is austere and uncolorful, but who speaks with an intense stillness so searching that the souls of men shudder, and then rejoice, as when deep answers to deep. So Tauler preached at Strassburg, and Newman at Oxford; and if one were to describe some of their sermons in the language of the Bible, he might truly say that "the place was shaken."

Still, for all his earnestness and eloquence, the preacher in the picture has an impassive, unattentive, even stolid congregation—so hard is it to give bread to people who prize it no more than stone. How hard, how costly it is in agony of soul only the preacher himself, and those nearest to him, ever really know. Yet so it is, often, through no fault of the preacher, but due to the fact that he is speaking against the wind, and his words are blown away. There are times, even whole generations, when the race of men—save a few elect who never let the fire go out—seem deaf to the faiths and truths that make it worth our time to live. But only for a time; old hungers and thirsts revive, old memories and longings begin to stir, and man returns from "a far country" haggard and weary. Bernard of Cluny said in 1150 that "the world is very evil and the times are waxing late"; but Francis and his friars were only a few years away, bringing a gospel of purity, pity and joy. In 1726 Bishop Butler said, as so many are saying today, "It is come to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much a subject for inquiry but now at length discerned to be ficti-

tious"; yet Wesley was at the door with a white fire in his heart. There is an ebb and flow of faith in the heart of man, like the tide, and the preacher in the picture is standing in the midst of an ebb-tide, as we are today.

None the less he goes on speaking, even if none, or only a few, will listen, bearing his witness in spite of indifference; as his brothers must do in our day, when faith has grown dim and many will not hear. Nor will he give up and let go of his faith, as some are wont to do, much less lower the ideal of his office by so much as one iota, whatever the temptation, lest he be found unfaithful. If only one might hear the preacher in the picture, and the tones of his voice as he pleads with his people, it would help us to feel the atmosphere of his personality and the emphasis of his insight. Even his beseeching figure seen afar off, half-hidden in the dimness, is arresting, and we are aware of his winsomeness, no less than of the high purpose of his appeal. Like every other preacher, he has only one sermon to preach, no matter what text or title he is using, or how often he may alter it. His real sermon is the story of his heart, the truth made real in his life and vivid in his vision, and he can tell no other triumphantly. Is it because he is not telling *his* truth—the truth learned by living and nearest to his heart—that his people are drowsy and will neither hear nor heed?

Many questions of a sort similar one asks about the preacher in the picture, as his sermon goes on, falling upon ears that hear not. One thing is plain, he is not arguing issues in the minds of his people, else they would be awake and alert, eager to hear and ready to refute his logic if it did not fit the fact as they see it. But is it the purpose of preaching, as some hold today, to discuss in the pulpit the problems of the pew? As a point of contact, yes; though, as often as otherwise, it digs up more snakes than it kills. What if the preacher makes his pulpit a forum and wins the debate, as he may easily do, since no one may reply to his arguments; of what use is it unless he has a deeper vision to lead the way where logic does not go? Of course he must aid his people in their difficulties, as God gives him light, but how can he do it most fruitfully? By arguing with them, or by sharing with them a clearer insight by which all are lifted to a level where our questions are either answered, or shown to be foolish? How strange it is to forget that in the life of the spirit there are no arguments; only discernments.

What is the secret of a real sermon, not a mere homily but the voice of a man who has won his way through to serenity, vision, and beauty? Nobody knows. It is a mystery past finding out, save by those who have a heart for high adventure and do not turn back. The wind of God blows; its sound is heard but its source is secret. It is not in rich learning, or skill of training, or quickness of psychological perception, or splendor of oratory, useful as such gifts may be. No; manifestly the secret lies farther back and deeper down, where no analysis can penetrate—in the soul of the preacher, spirit-born and love-illuminated,

his lips touched by a living coal from an unseen Altar. He is a man like the rest, but different; he hears "another Drummer," as Thoreau used to say of himself, not knowing how deep his words went. St. Paul put it in one sentence, telling all that words may report of things for which words were never made: "Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father."

Our compassion goes out to the preacher in the picture; one does not believe that he is a dull preacher—only the ears of men are dull, stuffed with doubt and deadened by the din of the world. Leaning over his rickety pulpit, at some risk, he is pleading with his people, pressing them to take a gift which he deems more precious than life, his arm outstretched, as if holding the treasure at the moment in his hand, and he will not be satisfied until every one has got possession of it. Even after the sermon is over, and he is about to pronounce the blessing, one expects to see him break out afresh in some new entreaty, as Chalmers used to do, unwilling to let his people go until he has made one more effort to persuade them to accept the gift of God.

THE PROPHETIC DAY

"Unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, . . . [a] babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:11, 12).

ONCE AGAIN the journeying months have brought us to the day of all the year the best—Christmas Day, with its cheer, its joy, and its gentle good will. We have national holidays of deep historic meaning and beauty; but this day is a day in the calendar of humanity—a day dedicated to the childhood and the home. Only one other day can compete with Christmas in our regard; that is Easter Day, with its "song of those who answer not, however we may call"; and, being Christian days, they are both days of hope. Is it not fitting that we have a festival of the dawn of life linked in our faith with the Easter hope at sunset?

What unaccountable blessings came to the world with one little

Child, born of poor parents in an obscure nook in a small country long ago, and who, without sword or pen, divided the story of man into before and after! What influence—nameless, ineffable, appealing—lay sleeping in that manger, to be liberated at length, like the winds of Elmos, changing the moral and spiritual climate of the earth! There shone a light that can never fail, revealing the Spirit of God and the meaning of life, making mother and child forever sacred, and softening the heart of the world. When one considers these things, one is constrained to accept the story of the Nativity—told with such dignity, restraint and beauty—as the only true account of the origin of such gentle, persuasive power.

What a record it is, linking the far-off pilgrim stars with the cradle of a little Child, as if to tell us that no hope dawns in the human heart that is not hailed in Heaven! It shows us once more, if we be wise, that the highest truth is born in lowly places, clad in humble garb befitting the humility of God, attended by simple shepherd sentiments, and that if we would find truth that is life we must follow our starry ideals, no matter how far they lead us—like the hoary star-gazers of the East who journeyed afar, following the gleam. Always the great introductions of God to the mind of man are through the great ideals of man—the ideal being the East, whence, in each new age, the starlight breaks upon our dim world to lead us to a better West. They who seek find; they who follow arrive; and he only is worthy of the truth who, forsaking a wisdom that is not wise, makes adventure to find it new-born of love and awe and wonder.

How beautiful it all is—an arch of hope spanning our mortal years from the cradle to the grave. What wonder that we gather at the cradle, by which we are saved, if saved at all, not less than by the Cross. For, as the life of Jesus began in a cradle, and unfolded in the growing soul of a babe, a boy, a man, covering all his days from Bethlehem to Olivet, so, to be of any value, our Christianity must be inwrought into the whole of our life, from dawn to dusk. To use the powers of man in the faith of a little child, to combine the child sense of wonder and joy with the hard facts with which long years make us familiar—that is a secret of life too simple to be found out.

Let me ask you to do one thing for me on Christmas morning, and only one. Take down that golden little Book which tells the story of Jesus, and read the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Read it without any theory; read it as if you had never seen it before, and let the story tell itself to your heart. Let the simple majesty of its beauty and the ineffable music of its lines steal over your mind, and you will enter once more the soul of youth, with whatever of regret, but with a sense of rebirth into your earlier, better, blither self. It will awaken within you the child that is never lost, but only blurred, in the man and woman. No wisdom find we there save that of innocence and beauty. There is a world duplicate of our own, but disinfected of all

the things that make us sad for, or hateful of, ourselves or others. There we learn that we are of finer stuff than old Time has turned us into—such stuff as dreams are made of, and that in what men call dreamland is our true home. Let us go there, and when we come back let us bring some of it with us in trailing clouds of glory to glamor the drab days that are but a muddled memory of what they should be.

One must have the heart of a child and the soul of a poet if he would read the story of Jesus—the Biography of Pity, the Memoirs of Love, the Sovereign Beauty of this world. God will not hang his pictures in a cold gray light. It is the poet who knows, and if God lets me fulfill half my dream, my hope is to make a Poet's Life of Jesus, telling in rhythmic numbers, in tales and golden histories, of the birth of God in man, assuring man of his life and destiny in God. Milton will sing for me of the Nativity, in lines as noble as ever were molded by mortal lips, while Elizabeth Browning will tell, as only a woman can tell, of the tingling joy and nameless prophecies in the mother-heart of Mary. Sidney Lanier, whose soul was a song, will sing of the visit of the Wise Men—how grave bards, hoary star-students, and pilgrim seekers after truth, bowed at the cradle of heavenly genius. Oliver Holmes will show us the Boy in the temple, questioning the doctors—with those starry eyes, strangely bright, divinely tender, searching the hidden places of the soul. On the story will go, setting truth to music, and men will read it in the warm and misty light of tears and know the truth as it is in Jesus.

There be men who say that the life of Jesus is only poetry, as if poetry were other than the truth, whereas it is the effort of man to reach the far-off peaks of truth. These Gradgrinds say that the Christ story is a fancy woven in a worshipful dream, and they are too wise to mistake fancies, however tender, for realities. They look upon the rest of us with a smile, half of pity and half of scorn, and ask for the haggard, old and ugly fact. Very well, let it be so. Let us have the facts, and since we are to have the facts, let us begin near at home.

Take Shakespeare, and try to account for the wonder of his amazing genius, its fertility and splendor. Go back into the hills of his ancestry, and try to find the spring from which so great a stream could flow. Search how you will, with all diligence, but you will not find it. No one can tell whence came that creative magic which, touching an old, rude tale, evoked the majestic and mournful soul of Hamlet—symbol of our humanity with its haunting hesitation and its wistful perplexity. By what secret did he give shape to the divine Desdemona, whose soul was as white as snow, as delicate as a flower, as tender as a prayer? Can you find along the banks of the Avon the birthplace of Miranda—that sweet daughter of wonder? No one has ever found it. Genius is a mystery whose hidings are veiled; God breathes it, and the rest is beyond our ken.

Let one of our wise men sit down, then, and tell me the facts about

Shakespeare, not mere names and dates, which are only the shells of truth, but the story of his soul and whence came his magic. We want to know the real facts about this master of the world of tragedy and song. If anyone attempts to tell it, his pen will begin to dance and glow with poetry, and before he closes he will be telling how some fairy kissed the bard of Stratford with her soft lips, and gave him a wand. Maybe he will tell us how the very air was aquiver with song, and that Vedic poets from India and grave seers from Greece came to pay him homage. Then he will be close to the cradle of Truth, for in the land of the soul facts are more romantic than fairy tales.

Come now and read the gospel story in this higher, clearer air. Throw your petty little theory out of the window, and look at the face of Christ, and tell me if that sweet old story, so far from being a dream woven on the loom of faith, is not a calm, sober and wonderfully restrained history! It is a leaf let fall from the Book of Life—as good an account as can be put into mortal words of the origin of such a being as Jesus.

What ineffable truths, what unspeakable prophecies, lie hidden in the Christmas story! For one thing, it bears witness to the reality, beauty and benignity of that unseen order which envelops our ruder life like a soft atmosphere. He is blind and deaf who does not know that above us and around us there is a higher, finer world, whence all sweet revelations, all happy miracles, descend. To our dull eyes its facts are wonders and its continents are dreams; but it is more real than the solid earth on which we live, in which we sleep at last. Of the reality of that world, with its light and music, its open windows of divine surprise, Jesus is the supreme witness, and it is no wonder that it became for the moment visible and vocal when he who made it so real and vivid was born. "Fear not," said the angel to the shepherds who trembled in the light of a world higher than their own. That is ever the message of Jesus—that the unseen is a place of beauty, not of horror. What this means in driving fear from the human heart, no words can tell.

If the unseen, before which man has so long crouched in terror, is a realm of light and love, eloquent with glad tidings, we have a right to ring the joy bells. To this vision philosophy comes at last, if it be true to the deepest facts of life, where the truth abides. Hear these words in which a noble thinker sums up his vision of "The Realm of Ends," the final result of all his high thinking:

And so God is love. What must that world be that is worthy of such love? The only worthy object of love is just love; it must, then, be a world that can love God. But love is free; in a ready-made world it could have no place. Hence the long and painful discipline of evolution, with its dying to live—the putting off the earthly for the likeness of God. In such a realm of ends we trust that God is love indeed and love the final law. We

cannot live or move without faith, that is clear. Is it not, then, rational to believe the best, and can there be a better?

But we cannot love God unless there be something within us akin to the divine, and it is God in man which Christmas discloses in its story of the Eternal Spirit taking the form of a child. This it is that links us with the far-off, journeying stars, and becomes the authentic basis of all the high idealisms and heroic optimisms of the race. Man in his loneliness seeks God, who is his Father, and seeking him, finds him—in himself! Finding a new star out of the edge of the sky is a tiny fact beside the discovery of God in the soul. The hope of our race lies in the birth and growth of the divine in man, refining lust into love, and greed into goodness. This is the prophecy of the Christmas vision, and it is a truth that lights up our mortal twilight with joy, changing even dull death into a last enchantment.

God in man—in all men, though mayhap in some men more vividly than in others—here is the real basis of all democracy worth the name. This is more than hinted to us in the Christmas scene, where grave seers and simple shepherds bow before a beauty in whose presence they are one in wonder, hope and joy. Whether rich or poor, learned or untaught, we are all of a piece, a mixture of dirt and deity, with faith and fears in common. Make no mistake; down in his heart, every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely, as yourself. Since we have the same spark of divinity within us, the same dogs of passion at our heels, and the same starry ideals above us, it is therefore that we should love one another. Why should we not give full play to our effort to escape from our loneliness through endeavor to know, to understand and to help our fellows?

If Easter teaches us hope in the life to come, Christmas asks us to hope for the life that now is. And the hope of the world is the child. Here the everlasting enterprise of education finds its reason and its sanction. The child holds in his hand, chubby and dirty, the future of the race, our hope of social beauty, national sagacity and human welfare. He is the custodian of whatever truth and worth we may bequeath to the times to come; the windows in which at sunset we see the morning light of a new day. In him we live again, if in no other way—save in the memory of God who does not forget. Nor does any man do more to bring to earth the Kingdom of Heaven than he who takes care that his child is nobly and sweetly born. A child born in purity and honor will not need to be born again, unless some killing sin slay him by the way. It is no wonder that Wordsworth found in the heart of childhood hints of a life that shall endless be.

How different the Kingdom of Jesus from the empires amid whose contents he was born! His spirit made vital in his life, his truths made vivid in his words—these are his Kingdom, and it is this alone of which it can be said that it has no end. It cometh not by observation, but

subtly as the ether fills the eternal spaces, breathing through each life and making souls fit for the life of God. So then it is that, on the day of his birth, the devout imagination of the world recreates the past, and Bethlehem becomes as real as the home of our childhood. The manger, the mother, the babe, the shepherds, the angels—these are sounds and scenes we seem to have heard and witnessed. Though that picture belongs to the far past, yet does its holy light linger with us to exalt and bless.

Over the armed camp of that hard old Roman world the song of the angels rang out, like the bells of the City of God, proclaiming "Peace on earth among men of good will." How far off it must have seemed in that day; how far off it seems today! Hate hangs like a pall over the race. Nevertheless, it will come true. It is not a myth. It is not a mockery. Because it is far off we know that it is not our own music, but was sent into the soul of man by One who is as far above us as the stars are above the mist. It means much that we can hear it, despite the din of war and the sob that follows the evening sun around the world. Not in our day, not in many days, perhaps, but at last by the sweet might of him of whom it sings, the earth will fill up with men of good will, and war will be no more. Led by him

We shall come, not blindly impelled, but free,
To an orbit of order at last,
And a finer peace shall be wrought out of pain
Than the stars in their courses know;
Ah, me! but my soul is in sorrow till then,
And the feet of the years move slow.

Wherefore is it that we live for one day by the law of love and then turn again quickly to render each other in strife? Why do nations at war lift hands in prayer to him who taught us to love our enemies? Why do men who deny Christ yield, for one day, to the spell of his spirit and the teaching of his words of charity and pity? Is there any explanation of such a discord between dream and deed? To my thought, yes. It lies in the fact that Christmas is a prophetic day, looking not so much backward as forward. It belongs to an order of society not yet attained; to a Christianity not yet realized; to a coming but yet distant time when men shall lay aside their weapons and learn to love one another. God be thanked for a dream so divine—for a day of poetry and prophecy amid gray days of prose and long nights of woe!

How we remember our Christmas celebrations—those of old time, when the home circle was unbroken, and the later ones with their vacant chairs. Yet even when we are most alone, there is always someone to bless, on that day, in the spirit of him who is so great a blessing; someone to remember in the name of him whose life is the greatest memory in the world. We work and plan that the child may have his

toy, and the friend some token of our regard. The son of toil, who, on other days, may have regretted that young lips ever named him "father," on that day sits happy by his fireside. Then, too, the weary mother forgets her care, and is lifted for a brief time into something resembling joy.

Welcome the spirit of Christmas—symbol of the Eternal Child and the "cradle endlessly rocking." It is needed in this old world, if only to keep alive the souls of us, and to renew our faith in almost forgotten dreams. May it flourish to the confounding of all unkindness, all uncleanness. It takes us down from our towering pride, and teaches us humility and sweet charity. It brings us, on one day at least, to a simplicity of faith in the Golden Age, free of the shadow of the Night and the fear of the Morrow.

Blessed Christmas Day—it rescues us, for a moment, from the tyranny of things, and gives such as have lost their child-heart hope that it will come back to them again sometime, somewhere—if not on earth, mayhap out yonder with the dwellers of the City on the Hill.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT JOSEPH FORT NEWTON:

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CLARENCE MACARTNEY

1879–1957



CLARENCE MACARTNEY, photograph, courtesy of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY

- 1879 *Born September 18 in Northwood, Ohio*
- 1901 *Received B.A. from University of Wisconsin*
- 1904 *Received M.A. from Princeton University*
- 1905 *Received B.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary
and began ministry at First Presbyterian Church,
Patterson, New Jersey*
- 1914 *Began ministry at Arch Street Presbyterian Church,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*
- 1927 *Became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*
- 1953 *Retired from active pastorate*
- 1957 *Died in February*

CLARENCE MACARTNEY led the conservative forces of Presbyterianism during the second quarter of the twentieth century. Yet he fitted none of the stereotypes of a fundamentalist. Far from being backward or uneducated, he was from a cultured family and had the finest academic credentials. Not given to boisterous invectives, he was a steady proponent of his theological views. His chief theological opponent, Harry Emerson Fosdick, said of Macartney:

The attack that followed was launched by Clarence Edward Macartney, then minister of a Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. He was very decent and dignified in his attitude. While his theological position was in my judgment incredible, he was personally fair-minded and courteous. Indeed, when the storm was just breaking, he wrote me directly, in order to be sure that he was not misquoting me. After that we had some frank and not unfriendly correspondence, in which he presented his own unbending orthodoxy, shocked at my

doctrinal looseness; and I, still hoping that tolerance might win, tried in a conciliatory way to make him see that while I differed from him in my intellectual formulations, I was endeavoring to maintain, just as much as he was, the timeless values and truths of the gospel.¹

LIFE AND TIMES

Clarence Edward Macartney was born, the last of seven children, in the home of a conservative Presbyterian minister on September 18, 1879, in Northwood, Ohio. His father was a preacher and teacher of the Reformed Presbyterian church; his mother was a devout Scottish girl.

As a youth, Macartney was scholarly. In addition to his interest in religion, he developed an avid thirst for knowledge about the Civil War. Later he wrote a number of books about the Civil War and became rather well known as an amateur historian. At the University of Wisconsin he majored in English and was active in debate. From Princeton, he earned a master's degree in English. He received a B.D. degree in 1905 from Princeton Theological Seminary.

After completing his formal education, Macartney became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Patterson, New Jersey. He served there until 1914, when he became minister of the Arch Street Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. In 1927 he began a period of service in the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which lasted until he retired in 1953.

In addition to his work in local churches, he was active in the life of his denomination and country. Acquainted with Woodrow Wilson and interested in public affairs, Macartney dedicated one of his booklets to Wilson. Macartney was involved in temperance reform and cooperated with the Anti-saloon League to fight the local option bill in Congress. From 1924 until 1925, he served as moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

He was widely sought as a lecturer and he delivered numerous prestigious lectures: the Stone Foundation Lectures, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1928; the Smyte Lectures, Columbia Theological Seminary, 1939; lectures for the Princeton Institute of Theology, 1944-45. Macartney was also a

1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Living of These Days* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), pp. 146-47. Used by permission of Harper & Row.

prolific writer. During his career he wrote more than fifty books in the fields of history, biography, and religion.

Macartney feared the encroachments of liberalism not only in his denomination but in the Christian movement as a whole. He threw himself into the effort to stem the tide of modernism. When Harry Emerson Fosdick preached his famous sermon "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" he countered with a sermon, "Shall Unbelief Win?" Orthodoxy concerned him more than denominational affiliation. After preaching a series of radio sermons on Christian doctrines, he learned that a group of Catholic students at a local seminary had responded enthusiastically to his message. In response he declared that there was more in common between an evangelical Protestant and a Roman Catholic than there was between a Protestant evangelical and a Protestant modernist.

Like many conservative ministers of his day Macartney devoted much of his sermon time to fighting personal moral evils. He attacked the secularization of the sabbath, motion pictures, liquor advertising, vice in the city, and similar sins. Broader social issues drew almost no attention from Macartney, with only one exception. During World War I and World War II he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Allied cause, and he utilized his pulpit for patriotic rallies. He apparently gave little notice to the national causes of the depression of the 1930s and took no side in the economic disputes of his parishes.

Beyond question, the greatest controversy of his ministry was the modernist-fundamentalist conflict. Much of his writing was devoted to that battle. Radio addresses and public speeches as well as sermons were devoted to expounding the fundamentalist position. He stood firm on the issues of the virgin birth of Christ, the literal interpretation of the creation account of Genesis, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the infallibility of the entire Bible. In his crusade he had the services of William Jennings Bryan, a close friend and political orator, who soundly denounced modernism. It was Bryan who nominated Macartney to be moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1924.

Macartney took his denominational responsibilities seriously. He served on the board of directors of the Princeton Theological Seminary; and when Princeton Seminary appeared to be going in the direction of modernism, Macartney left the board of that seminary and joined the board of the newly formed, conserv-

ative Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He was willing to put his theological convictions into action within his denomination.

In spite of his zealous devotion to his convictions and his hard work in his vocation, he maintained a sense of humor. When elected as moderator of the Presbyterian church, he recounted a dream he had had the night before. He said that he had dreamed that he was elected to be moderator and then immediately sentenced to be hanged. He said, "The first part has come true; no doubt there are some here who may wish that the second part also would come true."² No doubt a number of modernists did fervently wish it. Macartney was an effective protagonist.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Clarence Macartney thought of himself as a biblical preacher. He said in his autobiography, *The Making of a Minister*, "My preaching has been based entirely on the Bible."³

But he was a different kind of a biblical preacher. That term has come to mean someone who preaches detailed expository sermons, and Macartney disliked expository sermons. He felt that such preaching was usually tedious and dull. He argued that expository preaching was not the only kind of biblical preaching. Macartney called himself a topical preacher, one who preached the great truths as revealed in the Bible. He insisted that content, not form, was the criterion for judging a biblical sermon, and that other sermon forms, such as biographical, historical, or doctrinal developments, could be as biblical as expository sermons.

On the other hand, Macartney criticized those who did not take a text or who used a text only for the purpose of displaying their own opinions. He believed that either a sermon was "biblical" or it was not a true sermon.

The sermons of Macartney are full of biblical material, some from his text, some from parallel passages, some from the context of the passage, and some from biblical illustrations. And yet his sermons frequently do not really develop the text he

2. Clarence E. Macartney, *The Making of a Minister: The Autobiography of Clarence E. Macartney*, ed. J. Clyde Henry (Great Neck, N.Y.: Channel Press, 1961), p. 193.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

has chosen. The text becomes a rhetorical suggestion which Macartney used as a springboard to pursue his subject throughout the entire Bible.

Undoubtedly Macartney's greatest strength as a preacher was his biographical preaching. He used many of the various developmental styles for biographical sermons. Three general forms occur most frequently in his sermons: subject analysis, thematic analysis, and proposition analysis. Several minor forms for biographical development were also followed less often, including character analysis, crisis analysis, lesson analysis, and comparison or contrast analysis.

Macartney had the same gift of narrative as the finest novelists; his ability for description almost approached genius. All of his characters seem contemporary. In his sermons the biblical world seems more real than the contemporary world.

Macartney was weak, however, in the practical matters of sermon organization. The ideas which he extracts from the life-principles of biblical characters are sometimes so diverse or unrelated to one another that his development seems shallow and confusing. Nevertheless, this fault is the exception rather than the rule in his sermons. Macartney's development usually follows so naturally the history of the character he is describing that little confusion results in his theme.

Perhaps three typical sermons will illustrate his method of sermon development.

In the sermon "The Man Who Won and Then Lost," Macartney pursued his usual approach: narrating the life of his central figure, then using vivid illustrations to apply the lessons from the biblical story. This same kind of development, with some variation, is also followed in the sermon "Chariots of Fire." The sermon "Amnon" arranges four lessons from the text in analytical form:

- I. The power of social principles.
- II. The baneful influence of wrong friendships.
- III. How men are wrecked through their friendships.
- IV. Safeguards in friendships.
 - A. Fixed principles.
 - B. The courage of loneliness and isolation.

The theme of this sermon is easy to follow, but the outline shows the erratic nature of his development. With smoother

transitions and greater unity of thought, many of Macartney's biographical sermons would have been strengthened.

In the sermon "The Saddest Word," Macartney used several biblical characters to illustrate the sadness of sin. This is a powerful and appealing sermon, again one in which the theme is well presented; yet it is difficult to present so many Bible characters without some resulting confusion. Had Macartney been less gifted in description, his manner of development would have made these sermons impossible to follow.

He has been criticized for excessive illustrative material in some of his sermons. That criticism is partly true, but for the most part his sermons are not overly illustrated. There is a great variety about the nature of his illustrations, many of which are taken from history or literature. They do not resemble the cheap, sensational, or unbelievable illustrations of many of his contemporaries. In almost every case they seem adequately researched and properly documented. Macartney was effective in applying these vignettes to human experience.

If there is any fault in his sermon illustrating, it is in the grouping of his illustrations. Usually Macartney devoted the first part of his sermons to narrative, the last part to application and illustration. This arrangement frequently caused an imbalance in his sermons, with all of the illustrations weighing heavily at the end. His style is much improved in those sermons where the illustrations are dispersed throughout the body of the discourse.

Macartney usually began the introduction to his sermons with textual narrative; at times he opened with contemporary illustrative material, although he employed this method less frequently. But in either case he never lost his appeal. All of Macartney's sermons quickly catch attention, and his unfailing ability to sustain interest makes all of his sermons fascinating reading.

Perhaps "Come Before Winter" is his greatest sermon; it has received higher critical acclaim than any other. The introduction to that sermon gives an indication of its excellence:

Napoleon Bonaparte and the Apostle Paul are the most renowned prisoners in history. One was in prison because the peace of the world demanded it; the other because he sought to give to men that peace which the world cannot give and which the world cannot take away. One had the recollection of cities and homes which he had wasted

and devastated; the other had the recollection of homes and cities and nations which had been blessed by his presence and cheered by his message. One had shed rivers of blood upon which to float his ambitions. The only blood the other had shed was that which had flowed from his own wounds for Christ's sake. One could trace his path to glory by ghastly trails of the dead which stretched from the Pyrenees to Moscow and from the Pyramids to Mount Tabor. The other could trace his path to prison, death, and immortal glory by the hearts that he had loved and the souls that he had gathered into the Kingdom of God.

Macartney's sermons read well, and they were also appealing to hear. He possessed a fine voice for the delivery of his sermons and maintained excellent audience rapport by his direct delivery. His perfect articulation, deliberate phrasing, solemn tone, and confident manner, combined with his naturally pleasing voice, gave him the ability to communicate well. His speaking rate was rather slow. He had scarcely any flexibility in pitch, yet his voice was interesting. Perhaps the secret of his audience rapport was the empathy Macartney sustained with the characters of his text, along with his own profound interest in people.

The appealing style of Clarence Macartney is readily discernible in the sermons included in this selection. Each is a fine example of the work of one of the finest biographical preachers in the history of preaching.

Sermons

THE SADDEST WORD

“Sin croucheth at the door” (Genesis 4:7).

WHAT is the saddest word in the Bible and in human speech? Some thought that it was Death; others, Hell; others, Depart; and many voted for Lost. But what is the saddest word? What is the word that is the fountain of woe, the mother of sorrows, as universal as human nature, as eternal as human history? What is the word that is the cause of all war and violence and hatred and sorrow and pain? What is the word that is man's worst enemy? What is the word that nailed the Son of God to the Cross? That word is, Sin. “Sin croucheth at the door” (Gen. 4:7).

And there, ever since, with its sorrow and its woe, sin has been crouching at humanity's door, and will continue to crouch, until the world has been redeemed.

This is not the first appearance of sin, but the first mention of sin, and the first appearance of the final fruit of sin. “When lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.” Here, then, you have death, the first murder, the first death of man, as the finished work of sin. This is the beginning of the long, sad chapter of sin, a chapter which comes to a close only with the last chapter of the Bible, when there shall be no more curse and no more sin. All the sorrow, all the woe, all the bitterness and violence and heartache and shame and tragedy between man's creation and fall and his final redemption and restoration to the image of God is summed up in that one word “sin.”

Lost is, indeed, a sad word; so sad that only Christ who came to seek and to save the lost would seem to have the right to pronounce it. But through what are men lost? Lost to themselves, and lost to God. They are lost through sin, and when we deal not with effects but with causes there is no doubt that sin is the saddest word.

Reprinted from Clarence E. Macartney, *The Greatest Words in the Bible and in Human Speech* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1938), pp. 11-20. Used by permission of Abingdon Press.

Our plan is to show the sadness of sin, not by abstract argument or reasoning, but by illustration in the lives of men, by a recital of what sin did in the lives of men whose history is related in the Bible. The Bible is the perfect and eternal mirror of the human heart, and you can count on it that what sin did in the lives of men in the Bible it is doing in the lives of men today. What was true of man in Eden is true of man in Hollywood; and what was true of man in Jericho and Jerusalem is true of man in New York or Pittsburgh.

CAIN AND THE SADNESS OF SIN IN PERSONAL AND FAMILY LIFE

There was something wrong with Cain before he brought his offering, for God's displeasure and rejection of Cain's offering, and His acceptance of the offering of Abel, was not because of what Cain brought, the firstlings of the field, or what Abel brought, the first fruits of his flocks. The trouble was in the heart of Cain. God said to him, warning him, "If thou doest evil, sin croucheth at the door." This sin in the heart of Cain was quickly followed, for sin multiplies rapidly, by the sin of envy and hatred. For the first time in the history of mankind sin painted man's face with the dark colors of hatred and jealousy. Hate lifted its hand and the first murder was committed, and the blood of Abel cried for vengeance from the ground, stained for the first time, alas, not for the last, with the blood of man.

Here, at the very beginning of man's history, you have a powerful demonstration of the sorrow and havoc of sin in personal and family relationships. This was a brother who slew his brother. Life has its struggles and hardships and trials; but where love and loyalty light the way all things can be endured. The real bitterness and sadness are in the infidelities and cruelties of personal and family relationships. This is the real burden and load of life. Widen the circle and you come to the relationship of nations, for God hath made of one blood all nations of men; and wherever man kills man he kills a brother. From peaceful Majorca, and out of the incomparably blue sky, suddenly six planes appear in the heavens above populous Barcelona. As they float in ether, men in those planes pull a lever, and in a few minutes half a thousand are dead and mangled, hundreds more wounded, and thousands broken-hearted. What is the explanation? What is the explanation of those one hundred and fifty-three dead orphans lying among the slaughtered? What is it in man that produces so fearful a spectacle? Only one thing, sin.

SAUL AND THE SADNESS OF SIN IN THE HIGHLY GIFTED LIFE

There is always something likable and appealing in Saul. He draws you like a magnet across the ages. In many respects he was a great man, head and shoulders over all Israel, not only in stature, but in moral qualities, such as courage, patriotism, humility, and sincere affection. His choice for the first king of Israel seems well justified.

Then pride and disobedience, reliance upon himself instead of upon God, show themselves in his life and when he has been rejected and another chosen in his place, then jealousy begins to rage in his heart. We behold him seeking to kill his son whom he loved, and David his best friend, who had charmed away with his lyre Saul's evil spirit. Then, abandoned by Samuel, rejected and forsaken by God, Saul goes at midnight to consult the witch and call up dishonored and neglected Samuel, who pronounces upon him tomorrow's doom, "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me."

There you see what sin can do to a great and gifted life. No wonder Samuel wept all night over Saul and his fall, no wonder that David, in the most beautiful poem ever spoken by man, lamented over Saul, his shield and his bow vilely cast away as if he had not been anointed with oil. Sin spares none. It strikes at the highest and loves a shining mark. How often the story of Saul has been repeated, and men with preëminent gifts and notable talents have been broken, dishonored, and dethroned by sin.

DAVID AND THE SADNESS OF SIN IN THE GODLY MAN

David was a godly man, and his every natural impulse was Godward. That is true in spite of the ever repeated scoffing of ungodly men at the character of David. On one side of his life he was, indeed, a man after God's own heart. That was spoken of David, remember, before his fall, not after it.

When David ought to have been at the head of his army, which was abroad in a distant campaign, he remained at home. Taking his ease one night on the roof garden of his palace he saw a beautiful woman and was enamored of her and took her for his own. That was not the first nor the last time that such a thing has happened. But David's first sin was followed by something much worse, the cruel and treacherous murder of the woman's husband, and David's loyal officer in the army. That is the story of David's fall.

Now, who is this that we see prostrate in the dust? And whose cries of penitential confession are these that we hear? Who is this that beseeches God not to cast him away from His presence, and not to take His Holy Spirit from him? David, is it thou? Thou, the ruddy youth who kept the sheep on the hillside, the youth who slew both the lion and the bear? David, is it thou, the youth who of all the sons of Jesse was chosen by Samuel to be the king of Israel? David, is it thou, the youth who with his sling and his trust in God slew the blasphemous Goliath? David, is it thou, who with thy harp didst drive out the evil spirit from gloomy Saul? David, is it thou, whom Jonathan loved so tenderly? David, is it thou, who when Saul, thine enemy, was in thy hand, didst twice spare him, refusing to smite the Lord's anointed? David, is it thou, the singer of the Psalms which still breathe and express in deepest melody the noblest aspirations, the grandest

faith and trust, the deepest sorrows of the Christian? Yes, David, alas, it is thou! Would that thou hadst fallen first on the field of battle. Holy angels, who are wont to frequent this sacred house, withdraw now for a little, we pray thee, from this place! Holy angels, withdraw; for if too sad this spectacle for man to behold, what, holy angels, unfallen spirits of God, must it be to you. Withdraw! withdraw! and leave us to mourn alone over this adulterer and murderer who once was the man after God's own heart.

But all these things are written for our admonition, and we are glad that the Holy Spirit who inspired this record, and inspired the songs and prayers of David, did not spare us the story of his fall, for even in his fall David is our friend and our teacher. Here we learn how sin, even the worst of sins, attacks the godly man. No past devotion, no past confession, no past prayers, not yesterday's resolve and repentance, but only the repentance and the faith and the prayers of *today* can keep us out of temptation and deliver us from sin.

PETER AND THE SADNESS OF SIN AS A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

It is midnight on the night of nights. The fire burns in the courtyard of the high priests. Servants, soldiers, hangers on, and two disciples are standing about that fire. A door opens into a chamber off the courtyard and Jesus is led out, bleeding from the cruel blows which have been showered upon Him, mocked, insulted, and spat upon. Just at that moment a loud, angry voice rings out through the courtyard, saying with coarse oaths, "I never knew him!"

Who can this be? Is it the man whom his brother Andrew brought to Christ, and looking upon whom Jesus said, "Thy name is Simon. Henceforth it shall be Peter, the Rock"? Is it the man who fell at the feet of Christ in the fishing boat and sounded the prayer for all penitents, "Depart from me, O God, for I am a sinful man"? Is it the man who when Christ asked his disciples to tell Him who he was, confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"? Is it the man who, when many of his disciples forsook Him, answered the plaintive question of Jesus, "Will ye also leave me and go away?" with that great word which still in every crisis in life keeps the follower of Christ from the abyss of unbelief, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life"? Is it the man whom Christ took up with him to the Mount of Transfiguration, and who was so inspired by what he saw and heard that he wanted to build three tabernacles and stay there forever? Is it the man who said though all others forsook Christ he would not leave him? Is it the man who with splendid courage drew his sword, and undaunted faced the mob in the garden of Gethsemane?

Yes, Peter, alas, it is thou! Thou art the man! All of heaven's sorrow and amazement is in that look of Christ when he looked upon Peter that night; and the saddest tears that were ever wept were the tears of Peter when he went out that night and wept bitterly.

These men show in their life's history the sadness of sin and prove, what really needs no proof, that sin is the saddest word in the Bible and in human speech. But the Bible is the perfect and eternal mirror of the human heart. Do not imagine that this is just past history, or just Biblical history. No; read the papers, read the best sellers, read the story of the lives of men and women about you, read your own life, and you will see that the sin of Cain, man's inhumanity to man, still makes the earth a sad place; that gifted and noble men like Saul are wrecked and ruined by sin, that godly men like David can be brought low in the dust, even by the sins of the flesh, and that men and women who follow Christ, and in their hearts love Him, can yet strangely and sadly deny Him.

But there is one more life which reveals the supreme sadness of sin. Three crosses on a lonely, barren, skull-shaped hill, a thief on this cross and a murderer on that; and between them a man with a crown of thorns on his head and blood flowing from his hands and his feet and his side, while those in front of His cross jeer at Him and mock Him. And who is this? This is the Son of Man, the Son of God, the One altogether lovely, the Prince of Peace. This is He before Whom seraphim and cherubim fall down and veil their faces. And yet he hangs bleeding, reviled, and forsaken on a cursed tree! What brought Him there? What did this terrible deed? What made Immanuel cry out, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow"? It was sin! Your sin and my sin nailed Him to the Cross. There we behold the deepest and darkest sadness of sin. No wonder the sun could not endure it and veiled his face; no wonder the stable earth shook to its foundations.

But wait! Sin has overreached itself on the Cross. The blow that it struck when it crucified Christ became the blow of liberation for all the victims of sin. Sin's masterpiece of sadness became God's masterpiece of forgiveness and mercy. Through that death sin itself, for the believer in Christ, is crucified. That death is the foundation of our hope, the prediction of our triumph.

Thus the saddest word and the saddest theme become the gladdest word and the most joyful theme. The world has enough sadness in it caused by sin. See that you do not add to that sadness. Has anyone here tonight been hurt by sin, saddened by sin, your own sin or the sin of another? Then come to the Cross. Here fervently kneel. Here is the remedy. Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

BE A CHRIST

“Until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19).

W. T. STEAD was a great figure in the journalistic world forty years ago. He was one of the notable persons who perished at sea when the Titanic went down on that April night in 1912. One of the survivors saw him as he stood alone at the edge of the deck in silence, and what seemed to be a prayerful attitude, or one of profound meditation. Stead was a courageous reformer, and in one of his campaigns in London to protect young girls and to raise the “age of consent,” he was arrested and convicted on some technical charge in connection with his campaign in the lower world, and was sentenced to prison. On Christmas day he had been writing a letter to a reclaimed girl encouraging her to stand fast and be a Christian. He was in the organ loft of the chapel prison and was looking down on the 600 prisoners when he heard a voice, “Why are you telling that girl to be Christian? Never tell anyone again to be a Christian. Always tell them to be a Christ.”

Stead said that his mind revolted at the thought, and he said to himself, “What blasphemy to tell anyone to be a Christ!” But again that insistent voice said to him, “Always tell them to be a Christ.” The more he thought about it the more it impressed him. Afterwards he wrote to Manning, Hugh Price Hughes, Benjamin Waugh, and others high in the Christian life of England, and all but one answered him to the effect that “Be a Christ” contained the essence of the Christian religion.

At first hearing this may shock you as it did William T. Stead when the words came to him out of the unseen there in the chapel of the dismal English prison. How could we tell anyone to be a Christ! Christ is the ancient of Days, the Son of Man, the Son of God, our Mediator, Redeemer, our Judge and our King. How absurd, then, we say at first, and how sacrilegious to tell one to be a Christ. But when we say today “Be a Christ” we assume, of course, those great and sublime truths about the person of Christ, His Deity, His Mediatorship, and His Kingship. We confess, too, that after we have done our best to follow in His steps, we are but unprofitable servants and need and must have the redeeming work of our Lord and Saviour. Christ is alone and unapproachable in the glory of His person and in the majesty of His work upon the Cross.

All this we reverently believe and take for granted. But at the same time there is this other and important side of Christian life and doctrine. It is strikingly set forth in that phrase which the English journalist heard on that Christmas day in the organ loft of the prison chapel,

"Be a Christ." When you think of it, the same thing is spoken by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. Perhaps the most arresting instance of that is what Paul says here to the Christian disciples at Galatia. He was in great distress of mind and heart because of a threatened decline from the faith among these people and lest they be tempted and seduced to believe on "another Christ," which is not another and has no power to save. He resorts to every weapon of the speaker and the writer, righteous anger, irony, pathos and apostrophe. Here with great affection and earnestness he says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

"Until Christ be formed in you." What does that amount to but that Christ can be formed in the heart of man? "Until Christ be formed in you!" Remember this was said by Paul, the man who so exalted the person and office of Christ, describing Him as the image of the invisible God, and the first born of every creature, the Creator of all things in heaven and in earth, before all things, and by whom all things consist, and in whom dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Remember this was said by Paul, and in this very Letter where he prays for these Galatians that Christ may be formed in them he lays down those great truths of Redemption which are the charter of Christian liberty and which more than any other writings in the Bible teach the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Yet it is Paul who says, "Till Christ be formed in you." This, then, is the exceeding high aim and goal, the heroic enterprise, the ceaseless warfare of the Christian, "Be a Christ."

I. A sublime Christian conception of man.

Here we have the high and lofty Christian thought of man. Christianity teaches the irrefragable truth of original sin and of the fall of man. This is a truth affirmed by common sense and logic and reinforced by the indisputable facts of man's life and history. To this fact the woes and wars and sorrow of our world bear sad and powerful witness. Psychology tries to frighten us by telling us about man's subsurface mind and all the dreadful motives and desires and reflexes that are there. But long ago Christ told us about the heart of man, that it is desperately wicked and deceitful above all else. He said it was not the things that went into a man that defiled him but the things that came out of his heart, and that out of the heart proceed murders, adulteries, and all wicked things. Yet it was Christ, who knew what was in man, who at the same time had such a sublime conception of man's nature that He said to men, "Be perfect," and again, "The Kingdom of God is within you." It was Christ who took upon Him man's nature and who on the Cross offered up His life for man's salvation. The Incarnation of the Son of God in human nature was, of course, unique and peculiar. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin. Thus

the Eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Yet that Incarnation of God in man set the seal on the sacredness of man's nature. It is a forever inspiring intimation of the dignity of man's life, of his capacity, of his destination. Reverently let it be said that the Incarnation of God in Christ shows that men are capable of an incarnation, of becoming Christlike, of having Christ, as Paul put it, formed within them. So long as we hold to that high view of Christian man, human hope cannot expire or perish from the earth. How beautiful the thought that Christ saw possible incarnation, a forming of Himself, even in publicans, in thieves, and in harlots! When we say then, "Be a Christ," we are not talking to an educated or developed beast. I cannot conceive of either Christ or Paul speaking to such a creature and telling them to have Christ formed within them; but I can conceive of the Incarnation for the sake of a man created in the image of God, but now through sin fallen from it; and I can conceive of St. Paul writing to these disciples on the windswept plains of Galatia, and saying to them, "Until Christ be formed in you."

II. What does it mean to have Christ formed within us?

When we ask ourselves just what this means to have Christ formed in us, the simple and natural answer is that it means to be Christlike. Christ told men, "Follow Me," and Paul said, "Follow me even as I follow Christ." To have Christ formed within us is to follow Christ and to do His will. How severely, too, Christ spoke of those whose views of His Lordship were correct, and who said to Him, "Lord, Lord," but were anything but Christlike in their life and who failed to do His will! Not those who said, "Lord, Lord," but those who followed Him and did His will should enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

About the turn of the century, a Kansas preacher wrote a book which was an immediate sensation, and had an almost unprecedented circulation. The title of the book was this, *What Would Jesus Do?* The book purported to describe the attempt of a man to do in every circumstance and condition of life, what he thought Jesus would do under like circumstances. This attempt, of course, led the man into some beautiful and difficult and dangerous experiences. It was a fine piece of imagination. There may be times when the path of Christian duty is not clear. But suppose that you could get all the members of all our churches and all our statesmen and rulers to do every day in their personal relationships and in the discharge of their respective offices what they gather from the New Testament Jesus would have done under similar circumstances? What a transformed world we would have!

What would Jesus do? And what was that book and that title but the echo of a much more famous and enduring book, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. And the book of Thomas à Kempis is only an echo of what Christ's disciple, Peter, wrote of Him, "Leaving

us an example that we should follow in His steps." Here is one of the memorable passages, a golden leaf from the pages of *The Imitation of Christ*: "Whoso followeth me walketh not in darkness, said the Lord. These are the words of Christ by which we are admonished to imitate His life and manners, if we will be truly enlightened and delivered from all bondage of our hearts."

When we think of the Christlike life and the spirit of Christ, we think of purity, and patience, and kindness, and pity, and comfort and sympathy, of helping and giving to others. It is rather a beautiful tribute to Christianity that when we talk about the "Christian spirit" we mean the spirit of forgiveness. In Seeley's paraphrase of the Book of Genesis, God said, "Let there be light and there was forgiveness." In his great Judgment scene how closely Christ identified Himself with the sick and the suffering, the naked, the hungry and the prisoner. And however that judgment scene is interpreted, and to whatever dispensation in the ages of redemption it belongs, it must ever be remembered that here it was not what men said or claimed, but what they had done to Him in the person of the sick, the prisoner, the hungry and the naked. That was the test.

But this passive, or perhaps benevolent, side of the Christian life is not all, nor indeed is it the most difficult. Christ on one occasion looked around Him in anger. He was capable of righteous indignation. He denounced hypocrisy, denounced wickedness in high places, denounced men who made long prayers and robbed widows and orphans, denounced unfilial children, who by a technicality of religious ritual, excused themselves from their duty to their parents. He denounced evil thoughts as well as evil deeds, and pronounced the judgment of God upon those who defiled the purity of marriage.

This side of the Christian life is more difficult than the other. When you follow Christ there, when that kind of a Christ is formed within you, it will bring adversaries and opposition, and sometimes persecution. Remember it was not His words of sympathy, or His miracles of kindness and compassion which brought Christ to the Cross, but His opposition to evil. Who can follow Christ there? What would Christ say of the liquor traffic, or the wholesale destruction of homes by the breaking of the marriage vow, of the sexual looseness of the age under the guise of progress and liberty? What would He say of a government that leaves God out? It takes courage to follow Christ in this way; and yet that courage is the proof of Christ within us. It was not when they saw their compassion or pity, or their prayers, but when they saw their boldness that the people of Jerusalem concluded that Peter and John and the other apostles had been with Christ.

III. The ability to have Christ formed in us is a proof of man's immortality.

A being who is capable of having Christ formed within him was not

made for the grave. "Dust to dust" has no application to him. That was what Paul thought about the matter when he said in his splendid way, "Christ in you the hope of glory." I like that! A Christlike life is both the hope and the proof of an eternal life. Who has not felt this when he has stood by the body or the grave of a godly, Christlike father or mother, or friend, or servant of God. Death does not seem to apply there at all. Where men have lived godless, selfish, and faithless lives, there let death set up his throne and his altar and dress it with such terrors as he has at his command; but over the faithful and believing Christian, over the Christlike life, he has no power, no dominion. Christ in you the hope of glory; the hope of immortal life, of rising to stand by the side of the saints of God, of living as long as God himself shall live, and with God and with Christ. "O Death, where is thy sting! O Grave, where is thy victory!"

Be a Christ! Be a Christ in patience, in kindness, in sympathy, in prayerfulness, in love, in resistance to that which is wrong, in struggling for the coming of the Kingdom, in resistance to temptation, in the struggle for purity of soul. In a rural church I heard a sermon which dealt with the great promises of God, and how God is bound to help us when we set out to seek Him and to follow in the footsteps of Christ. The preacher was not a son of thunder, but he said one thing to his people which I remember, and which sums up now what I have said to you, "You can be as good a Christian as anyone else." Yes, that is true. There is no one in the Church this morning who, if he wants to be, and wills to be, cannot by the help of God's Spirit, be as good a Christian as Peter, or John, or Paul, or Augustine, or Francis, or Thomas à Kempis, or Barnabas. Be a Christ! May Christ be formed in your hearts.

Many years ago a minister went to an old church in the lower section of New York. There were few present, and the preacher was an old man whose power was spent and whose eye was dim. But the man who heard him preach that day never forgot one thing he said. It was the story of a French soldier in the wars of Napoleon. The soldier had been wounded in the breast, and in the field hospital the surgeons were probing for the bullet. There was no chloroform then, but the wounded man was watching the surgeons as they cut closer and closer to his heart. When the region about the heart was entered and opened, the suffering soldier said, "Surgeon, if you cut much further you will touch—the emperor." He had his emperor in his heart! What about your Emperor? The Emperor of emperors, the King of kings and Lord of lords? Do you have him in your heart? "Be a Christ!"

I WENT INTO ARABIA

Galatians 1:17

WHEN it pleases Him, God calls us out of the business and work and turmoil of our life and sends us into Arabia, the desert place of retirement, silence and solitude, and speaks to us there with "a still, small voice."

It was so in the history of St. Paul. In this letter to the Galatians Paul adds a very interesting fact to the account of his conversion as it is related in the Book of Acts. He tells us that immediately after his dramatic conversion at Damascus, whither he had gone to persecute the disciples of Jesus, he went into Arabia. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia."

So greatly called of God, and converted to Christ from his fierce enmity and his persecution of the Church, Paul, no doubt, was eager and impatient to begin his work as an apostle and proclaim the grace of God who had delivered him from a life of sin and the power of darkness, and "translated him into the Kingdom of his dear Son." But instead of that, he was sent into Arabia, far removed from Tarsus, Antioch, Damascus, Jerusalem and the pulsing tides of the world's stir and life. And there he was, apparently, for three years; a long time of retirement, seclusion, and waiting. But that was where God desired him to be; and there God spoke to his soul. There, we have reason to believe, he received in full outline the Gospel and message which he afterwards proclaimed with so great enthusiasm, devotion and power, for he says that the Gospel which he preached he did not receive from man, neither was he taught it, but it came to him "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Perhaps it was during those three years in Arabia that he received the full revelation of what he so splendidly called "the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God."

Taking, then, our suggestion from the experience of St. Paul, we shall think of Arabia as the place of retirement and silence, when God breaks up the fixed order of our life, and speaks to us a message which we cannot hear elsewhere.

The experience of Paul was one through which many of God's greatest servants were called to pass. Paul was by no means the first or the last of God's servants and witnesses to go into Arabia. It was to

Reprinted with permission from *First Church Life* of the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. Preached by Dr. Macartney on May 8, 1949, upon resuming his pulpit after an absence of eleven months through illness.

Arabia that Moses fled after he had slain the Egyptian whom he saw abusing one of the Hebrews; and it was there that as he was keeping the flock of his father-in-law on "the back-side of the desert," near the grim mountain of Horeb, that he saw the bush burning with fire, yet not consumed, and received his commission to go back to Egypt and deliver his people out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.

Into this same Arabia went another great servant of God in the crisis of his life. On Mt. Carmel Elijah had won a notable victory over the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal who had corrupted the court and the people with their idolatry. But after that victory the vindictive rage of Ahab's queen, Jezebel, compelled him to flee to the south into the wilderness, where he lay down beneath a juniper tree and besought God to take away his life. After that he went still farther into Arabia, clear down to Horeb, the mount of God. It was there that God said to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And it was there that the Lord passed by; and after the whirlwind which brake in pieces the rocks, and the earthquake which shook the mountain, and after the fire, Elijah heard the "still, small voice," when God reassured him as to the Lord's cause in Israel and sent him forth on new prophetic duties.

John the Baptist, we are told, "was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel." Probably it was in this same Arabia that John waited and meditated until God called him to go forth and lift up his voice and cry, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"

After Jesus was baptized of John and of the Holy Spirit, the spirit "driveth him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." It was there in the solitude and loneliness of the desert, perhaps this same Arabia, that the first chapter in the history of Redemption was written, and Jesus won, for himself and for us, the victory over temptation.

Paul, then, had great forerunners in Arabia, and I doubt not that he thought often of them during his long stay in the desert. Most of us do not have enough of Arabia in our lives.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

In these Arabia periods of withdrawal and retirement we have time to be alone, to "salute our soul, and see what it doth wear." What seems at first to be only a lonely desert place and experience, with our spirits chafing to get free of it, turns out to be a place that draws us nearer to God, for there we confer not with flesh and blood, but with God.

THE LOCATION OF ARABIA

The historical, geographical and Biblical Arabia is not hard to locate. It was the country south of Palestine, on the peninsula between the

Red Sea and the Gulf of Arabia, where Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai are. But we are not thinking now of geographical or racial Arabias, but the Arabias of life, the Arabias of the soul.

1. *The Arabia of Sickness.* One of these Arabias of life is the Arabia of sickness. Those who hitherto had thought this Arabia the last place in the world they would ever visit, suddenly found themselves there. The man who, as Jesus said to Peter, girded himself and went wither he would, now stretches forth his hands to be girded by another.

Outwardly, in the tractations of pain, in the weary days and the sleepless nights, the restless tossing, the wishing for morning, and then wishing for the coming of the night, there would seem to be little that is good or profitable. Yet in this Arabia of sickness there are spiritual blessings and benefits.

One of these is that sickness teaches us humility. We learn how weak we are, and how even the strongest man dare not boast in his strength. It teaches us to pray the Psalmist's prayer, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am." In 1893, a secret carefully guarded from the public, the eminent Philadelphia surgeon, Dr. Keene, operated on President Grover Cleveland for cancer of the throat. Cleveland afterwards wrote of that experience: "I have learned how weak the strongest man is under God's decree; and I see in a new light the necessity of doing my allotted work in the full apprehension of the coming night."

The turning point in the life of one of the world's great preachers was a long illness, when he was minister of the Church at Kilmany. "God," said a New England philosopher, "enters every man's life by a private door." He entered Thomas Chalmers' life by the door of sickness. Up to that time his preaching was nothing more than a proclamation of morality. Astronomy and mathematics were his occupation and enthusiasm, rather than the Everlasting Gospel. But in 1809 Chalmers was stricken with a grave illness. For four months he did not leave his room, and for almost a year was absent from his pulpit. He found that his ethical view of Christianity had no voice or help for him in such a trial. Suffice it to say that out of that sickness Chalmers came forth with the oil of consecration upon his mighty brow. As eloquent Lord Roseberry said in his address on the one hundredth anniversary of Chalmers' settlement in Glasgow, "An illness lifted him into a higher sphere, and he soared aloft." So, he, and many another, could say with King Hezekiah after he was recovered from his sickness, "What shall I say? O Lord, by these things men live, and by all these things is the life of my spirit"; or with David, "It was for my good that I was afflicted."

2. *The Arabia of Disappointment.* To reach this Arabia one does not need to cross seas or continents. Sometimes we are turned aside from the eager pursuit of some cherished goal just when we think we have attained unto it. Just when we were about to seize the prize it eluded

our grasp. All our labor, toil, sacrifice and enthusiasm seemed to be in vain.

In the Second Book of the Kings there is the record of an expedition which Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, and the King of Israel fitted out to go to far off Ophir and bring back its gold. "But the ships went not, for they were broken on the rocks." And such is the history, the epitaph, of many a hope, ambition and dream. "The ships went not!"

But God has his deep and wise purpose in life's disappointments, as well as in all other things. He baffles and disappoints us in order to bring us to greater things and to a higher success. Disappointment is like a sieve: the small things drop through; the large things remain. Moses was sore disappointed when, standing on Mt. Nebo, he looked on the Land of Canaan, but was not permitted to enter in. He thought that was his last view of the Promised Land. But after the centuries had run by, lo, there he stands, on the soil of the Promised Land, on Mt. Tabor, with Elijah and with Him of Whom he wrote:

O lonely grave in Moab's land!
O dark Beth-Peor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.

God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
Of him he loved so well.

3. *The Arabia of Sorrow.* By the lonely path of sorrow, the soul travels into a far-off Arabia. Before we get through the journey of life, sometimes before we have travelled far along its winding path, all taste the cup of sorrow. The sights, the sounds, the occupations of the world are all about us; yet the soul is alone in its sorrow; like Jesus in Gethsemane, a "stone's cast" from even the nearest and most intimate.

What can sorrow teach us? What has it taught other souls? One thing that sorrow teaches us is not to value this world and the things in it, and time, above what they are worth. It teaches us to set our affections not upon the earth, but on high. It teaches us to take eternity into the reckoning.

Another of the great lessons of sorrow is sympathy. Even Jesus, we are told, who was "made perfect by suffering," was "made in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful and merciful high priest." A noted servant of God, one whose ministry and whose writings influenced for good thousands of lives, had early in his life a great sorrow. He had left his home to fill an engagement in a distant city. As he left his house he looked back and saw his little daughter as she was held up to the window and waved him a farewell. The next day he was

stunned by a telegram which told him of her sudden death. At first it seemed to him a blow that had staggered his faith and crushed his hopes. But as the years went by, and the vision of his child at that window came frequently back to him, it seemed to him that God had set her in one of the windows of heaven to beckon him ever upward to godly living and to his heavenly home. "I would not give that memory," he said, "for all the gold of earth. I would not part with the inspiration which it stirs within me for all the world could bestow." Like thousands of others who drank deep of sorrow's cup, he could say with the Psalmist, "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress."

4. *The Arabia of Temptation.* All men must visit this Arabia, and out of it they come overthrown and conquered, or, like Jesus, victorious and fitted for life's greatest things. The inspired evangelist records that immediately after his baptism by the Holy Spirit "Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Just where Jesus fought that great battle, for himself and for us, we cannot be sure. Perhaps it was in this very Arabia into which the Spirit drove Paul after his conversion. It was a wilderness of trial and loneliness and decision. Out of that trial and wilderness of temptation Jesus returned, Luke says, "in the power of the Spirit," and began to preach that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The victor over temptation knows, as Jesus did, what it means to have the "angels minister unto him," and thus fit him for ministering unto others.

I suppose it was in this very same Arabia that Abraham's bond woman, Hagar, driven out by the jealous anger of Sarah, fell down by the fountain in the desert, and heard the voice of the angel, who comforted her in her distress. It was then Hagar exclaimed, "Have I also here—even in this desert place—him that looketh after me? Thou God seest me!"

Whatever, then, your Arabia is, or has been, or shall be, be sure of this: it has great blessings for your soul. In Arabia you can gather the "treasures of darkness." But to do so you must believe what Paul, who spent three years in Arabia, learned, believed and so nobly declared, "that all things work together for good to them that love God."

COME BEFORE WINTER

“Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. . . . Do thy diligence to come before winter” (2 Timothy 4:9, 21).

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE and the Apostle Paul are the most renowned prisoners of history. One was in prison because the peace of the world demanded it; the other because he sought to give to men that peace which the world cannot give and which the world cannot take away. One had the recollection of cities and homes which he had wasted and devastated; the other had the recollection of homes and cities and nations which had been blessed by his presence and cheered by his message. One had shed rivers of blood upon which to float his ambitions. The only blood the other had shed was that which had flowed from his own wounds for Christ's sake. One could trace his path to glory by ghastly trails of the dead which stretched from the Pyrenees to Moscow and from the Pyramids to Mount Tabor. The other could trace his path to prison, death, and immortal glory by the hearts that he had loved and the souls that he had gathered into the Kingdom of God.

Napoleon once said, “I love nobody, not even my own brothers.” It is not strange, therefore, that at the end of his life, on his rock prison in the South Atlantic, he said, “I wonder if there is anyone in the world who really loves me.” But Paul loved all men. His heart was the heart of the world, and from his lonely prison at Rome he sent out messages which glow with love unquenchable and throb with fadeless hope.

When a man enters the straits of life, he is fortunate if he has a few friends upon whom he can count to the uttermost. Paul had three such friends. The first of these three, whose name needs no mention, was that One who would be the friend of every man, the friend who laid down his life for us all. The second was that man whose face is almost the first, and almost the last, we see in life — the physician. This friend Paul handed down to immortality with that imperishable encomium, “Luke, the beloved physician,” and again, “Only Luke is with me.” The third of these friends was the Lycaonian youth Timothy, half Hebrew and half Greek, whom Paul affectionately called “My son in the faith.” When Paul had been stoned by the mob at Lystra in the highlands of Asia Minor and was dragged out of the city gates and left for dead, perhaps it was Timothy who, when the night had come down, and the passions of the mob had subsided, went out of the city gates to search amid stones and rubbish until he found the wounded, bleeding body of Paul and, putting his arm about the Apostle's neck, wiped the blood stains from his face, poured the cordial down his lips and

then took him home to the house of his godly grandmother Lois and his pious mother Eunice. If you form a friendship in a shipwreck, you never forget the friend. The hammer of adversity welds human hearts into an indissoluble amalgamation. Paul and Timothy each had in the other a friend who was born for adversity.

Paul's last letter is to this dearest of his friends, Timothy, whom he has left in charge of the church at far-off Ephesus. He tells Timothy that he wants him to come and be with him at Rome. He is to stop at Troas on the way and pick up his books, for Paul is a scholar even to the end. Make friends with good books. They will never leave you nor forsake you. He is to bring the cloak, too, which Paul had left at the house of Carpus in Troas. What a robe the Church would weave for Paul today if it had that opportunity! But this is the only robe that Paul possesses. It has been wet with the brine of the Mediterranean, white with the snows of Galatia, yellow with the dust of the Egnatian Way and crimson with the blood of his wounds for the sake of Christ. It is getting cold at Rome, for the summer is waning, and Paul wants his robe to keep him warm. But most of all Paul wants Timothy to bring himself. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me," he writes; and then, just before the close of the letter, he says, "Do thy diligence to come before winter."

Why "before winter"? Because when winter set in the season for navigation closed in the Mediterranean and it was dangerous for ships to venture out to sea. How dangerous it was, the story of Paul's last shipwreck tells us. If Timothy waits until winter, he will have to wait until spring; and Paul has a premonition that he will not last out the winter, for he says, "The time of my departure is at hand." We like to think that Timothy did not wait a single day after that letter from Paul reached him at Ephesus, but started at once to Troas, where he picked up the books and the old cloak in the house of Carpus, then sailed past Samothrace to Neapolis, and thence traveled by the Egnatian Way across the plains of Philippi and through Macedonia to the Adriatic, where he took ship to Brundisium, and then went up the Appian Way to Rome, where he found Paul in his prison, read to him from the Old Testament, wrote his last letters, walked with him to the place of execution near the Pyramid of Cestius, and saw him receive the crown of glory.

Before winter or never! There are some things which will never be done unless they are done "before winter." The winter will come and the winter will pass, and the flowers of the springtime will deck the breast of the earth, and the graves of some of our opportunities, perhaps the grave of our dearest friend. There are golden gates wide open on this autumn day, but next October they will be forever shut. There are tides of opportunity running now at the flood. Next October they will be at the ebb. There are voices speaking today which a year from today will be silent. Before winter or never!

I like all seasons. I like winter with its clear, cold nights and the stars like silver-headed nails driven into the vault of heaven. I like spring with its green growth, its flowing streams, its revirescent hope. I like summer with the litany of gentle winds in the tops of the trees, its long evenings and the songs of its birds. But best of all I like autumn. I like its mist and haze, its cool morning air, its field strewn with the blue aster and the goldenrod; the radiant livery of the forests – “yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red.” But how quickly the autumn passes! It is the perfect parable of all that fades. Yesterday I saw the forests in all their splendor, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But tomorrow the rain will fall, the winds will blow, and the trees will be stripped and barren. Therefore, every returning autumn brings home to me the sense of the preciousness of life’s opportunities – their beauty, but also their brevity. It fills me with the desire to say not merely something about the way that leads to life eternal but, with the help of God, something which shall move men to take the way of life *now*, today. Taking our suggestion, then, from this message of Paul in the prison at Rome to Timothy in far-off Ephesus – “Come before winter” – let us listen to some of those voices which now are speaking so earnestly to us, and which a year from today may be forever silent.

I. THE VOICE WHICH CALLS FOR REFORMATION

Your character can be amended and improved, but not at just any time. There are favorable seasons. In the town of my boyhood I delighted to watch on a winter’s night the streams of molten metal writhing and twisting like lost spirits as they poured from the furnaces of the wire mill. Before the furnace doors stood men in leathern aprons, with iron tongs in their hands, ready to seize the fiery coils and direct them to the molds. But if the iron was permitted to cool below a certain temperature, it refused the mold. There are times when life’s metal is, as it were, molten, and can be worked into any design that is desired. But if it is permitted to cool, it tends toward a state of fixation, in which it is possible neither to do nor even to plan a good work. When the angel came down to trouble the pool at Jerusalem, then was the time for the sick to step in and be healed. There are moments when the pool of life is troubled by the angel of opportunity. Then a man, if he will, can go down and be made whole; but if he waits until the waters are still, it is too late.

A man who had been under the bondage of an evil habit relates how one night, sitting in his room in a hotel, he was assailed by his old enemy, his besetting sin, and was about to yield to it. He was reaching out his hand to ring the bell for a waiter, when suddenly, as if an angel stood before him, a voice seemed to say, “This is your hour. If you yield to this temptation now, it will destroy you. If you conquer it now, you

are its master forever." He obeyed the angel's voice, refused the tempter and came off victorious over his enemy.

That man was not unique in his experience, for to many a man there comes the hour when destiny knocks at his door and the angel waits to see whether he will obey him or reject him. These are precious and critical moments in the history of the soul. In your life there may be that which you know to be wrong and sinful. In his mercy God has awakened conscience, or has flooded your heart with a sudden wave of contrition and sorrow. This is the hour of opportunity, for now chains of evil habit can be broken, which, if not broken, will bind us forever. Now golden goals can be chosen and decisions made which shall affect our destiny forever.

We like to quote those fine lines from the pen of the late Senator John J. Ingalls:

Master of human destinies am I!
 Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait.
 Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
 Deserts and fields remote, and, passing by
 Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late,
 I knock unbidden once at every gate!
 If sleeping, wake; if feasting, rise before
 I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
 And they who follow me reach every state
 Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
 Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
 Condemned to failure, penury or woe,
 Seek me in vain and uselessly implore —
 I answer not, and I return no more.

We all recognize the truth of this in the things of this world, but in a far more solemn way it is true of the opportunities of our spiritual life. You can build a bonfire any time you please; but the fine fire of the Spirit, that is a different thing. God has his Moment!

We cannot kindle when we will
 The fire that in the heart resides.
 The Spirit bloweth and is still;
 In mystery the soul abides.

II. THE VOICE OF FRIENDSHIP AND AFFECTION

Suppose that Timothy, when he received that letter from Paul asking him to come before winter, had said to himself: "Yes, I shall start for Rome; but first of all I must clear up some matters here at Ephesus, and then go down to Miletus to ordain elders there, and thence over to Colossae to celebrate the Communion there." When he has attended to these matters, he starts for Troas, and there inquires when he can get

a ship which will carry him across to Macedonia, and thence to Italy, or one that is sailing around Greece into the Mediterranean. He is told that the season for navigation is over and that no vessels will sail till springtime. "No ships for Italy till April!"

All through that anxious winter we can imagine Timothy reproaching himself that he did not go at once when he received Paul's letter, and wondering how it fares with the Apostle. When the first vessel sails in the springtime, Timothy is a passenger on it. I can see him landing at Neapolis, or Brundisium, and hurrying up to Rome. There he seeks out Paul's prison, only to be cursed and repulsed by the guard. Then he goes to the house of Claudia, or Pudens, or Narcissus, or Mary, or Ampliatus, and asks where he can find Paul. I can hear them say: "And are you Timothy? Don't you know that Paul was beheaded last December? Every time the jailer put the key in the door of his cell, Paul thought you were coming. His last message was for you, 'Give my love to Timothy, my beloved son in the faith, when he comes.'" How Timothy then must have wished that he had come before winter!

Before winter or never! "The poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always," said Jesus when the disciples complained that Mary's costly and beautiful gift of ointment might have been expended in behalf of the poor. "Me ye have not always." That is true of all the friends we love. We cannot name them now, but next winter we shall know their names. With them, as far as our ministry is concerned, it is before winter or never.

In the Old Abbey Kirk at Haddington one can read over the grave of Jane Welsh the first of many pathetic and regretful tributes paid by Thomas Carlyle to his neglected wife: "For forty years she was a true and loving helpmate of her husband, and by act and word worthily forwarded him as none else could in all worthy he did or attempted. She died at London the 21st of April, 1866, suddenly snatched from him, and the light of his life as if gone out." It has been said that the saddest sentence in English literature is that sentence written by Carlyle in his diary, "Oh, that I had you yet for five minutes by my side, that I might tell you all." Hear, then, careless soul, who art dealing with loved ones as if thou wouldst have them always with thee, these solemn words of warning from Carlyle: "Cherish what is dearest while you have it near you, and wait not till it is far away. Blind and deaf that we are, O think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust clouds and dissonances of the moment, and all be made at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is too late."

On one of the early occasions when I preached on this text in Philadelphia, there was present at the service a student in the Jefferson Medical College (Dr. Arnot Walker, New Galilee, Pennsylvania). When the service was over he went back to his room on Arch Street, where the text kept repeating itself in his mind, "Come before winter." "Perhaps," he thought to himself, "I had better write a letter to my mother."

He sat down and wrote a letter such as a mother delights to receive from her son. He took the letter down the street, dropped it in a mailbox, and returned to his room. The next day in the midst of his studies a telegram was placed in his hand. Tearing it open, he read these words: "Come home at once. Your mother is dying." He took the train that night for Pittsburgh, and then another train to the town near the farm where his home was. Arriving at the town, he was driven to the farm and, hurrying up the stairs, found his mother still living, with a smile of recognition and satisfaction on her face—the smile which, if a man has once seen, he can never forget.

Under her pillow was the letter he had written her after the Sunday night service, her viaticum and heartease as she went down into the River. The next time he met me in Philadelphia he said, "I am glad you preached that sermon, 'Come Before Winter.'" Not a few have been glad because this sermon was preached. Let us pray that the preaching of it tonight shall move others to do that which shall make their hearts glad in the years to come.

Twice coming to the sleeping disciples whom he had asked to watch with him in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ awakened them and said with sad surprise, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" When he came the third time and found them sleeping, he looked sadly down upon them and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." One of those three, James, was the first of the twelve apostles to die for Christ and seal his faith with his heart's blood. Another, John, was to suffer imprisonment for the sake of Christ on the isle that is called Patmos. And Peter was to be crucified for his sake. But never again could those three sleeping disciples ever watch with Jesus in his hour of agony. That opportunity was gone forever! You say, when you hear that a friend has gone, "Why, it cannot be possible! I saw him only yesterday on the corner of Smithfield and Sixth Avenue!" Yes, you saw him there yesterday, but you will never see him there again. You say you intended to do this thing, to speak this word of appreciation or amendment, or show this act of kindness; but now the vacant chair, the unlifted book, the empty place will speak to you with a reproach which your heart can hardly endure, "Sleep on now, and take your rest! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep forever!"

III. THE VOICE OF CHRIST

More eager, more wistful, more tender than any other voice is the voice of Christ which now I hear calling men to come to him, and to come before winter. I wish I had been there when Christ called his disciples, Andrew and Peter, and James and John, by the Sea of Galilee, or Matthew as he was sitting at the receipt of custom. There must have been a note not only of love and authority but of immediacy and urgency in his voice, for we read that they "left all and followed him."

The greatest subject which can engage the mind and attention of

man is eternal life. Hence the Holy Spirit, when he invites men to come to Christ, never says "Tomorrow" but always "Today." If you can find me one place in the Bible where the Holy Spirit says, "Believe in Christ *tomorrow*," or "Repent and be saved *tomorrow*," I will come down out of the pulpit and stay out of it—for I would have no Gospel to preach. But the Spirit always says, "Today," never "Tomorrow." "*Now* is the accepted time." "*Now* is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "While it is called Today."

The reason for this urgency is twofold. First, the uncertainty of human life. A long time ago, David, in his last interview with Jonathan, said, "As thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." That is true of every one of us. But a step! What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!

An old rabbi used to say to his people, "Repent the day before you die."

"But," they said to him, "Rabbi, we know not the day of our death."

"Then," he answered, "repent today." Come before winter!

The second reason why Christ, when he calls a man, always says Today, and never Tomorrow, is that tomorrow the disposition of a man's heart may have changed. There is a time to plant, and a time to reap. The heart, like the soil, has its favorable seasons. "Speak to my brother now! His heart is tender now!" a man once said to me concerning his brother, who was not a believer. Today a man may hear this sermon and be interested, impressed, almost persuaded, ready to take his stand for Christ and enter into eternal life. But he postpones his decision and says, "Not tonight, but tomorrow." A week hence, a month hence, a year hence, he may come back and hear the same call to repentance and to faith. But it has absolutely no effect upon him, for his heart is as cold as marble and the preacher might as well preach to a stone or scatter seed on the marble pavement below this pulpit. Oh, if the story of this one church could be told, if the stone should cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber should answer, what a story they could tell of those who once were almost persuaded but who now are far from the Kingdom of God. Christ said, Today! They answered, Tomorrow!

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,

.....
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

Once again, then, I repeat these words of the Apostle, "Come before winter"; and as I pronounce them, common sense, experience, conscience, Scripture, the Holy Spirit, the souls of just men made perfect, and the Lord Jesus Christ all repeat with me, "Come before winter!" Come before the haze of Indian summer has faded from the fields!

Come before the November wind strips the leaves from the trees and sends them whirling over the fields! Come before the snow lies on the uplands and the meadow brook is turned to ice! Come before the heart is cold! Come before desire has failed! Come before life is over and your probation ended, and you stand before God to give an account of the use you have made of the opportunities which in his grace he has granted to you! Come before winter!

Come to thy God in time,
Youth, manhood, old age past;
Come to thy God at last.

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DICK SHEPPARD

1880-1937



DICK SHEPPARD, photograph from *Dick Sheppard by His Friends* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938).
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HUGH RICHARD LAWRIE SHEPPARD

- 1880 *Born September 2, Windsor, England*
- 1904 *Became lay secretary to bishop of Stepney, London*
- 1906 *Went to Cuddesdon College*
- 1907 *Ordained to the post of chaplain at Oxford House, Bethnal Green, London*
- 1909 *Became head of Oxford House, Bethnal Green, London*
- 1911 *Resigned Oxford House because of health; became curate, St. George's, Hanover Square, in charge of St. Mary's, Bourdon Street*
- 1914 *Served as chaplain and then became vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London*
- 1915 *Married Alison Lennox*
- 1926 *Resigned because of ill health; wrote The Impatience of a Parson*
- 1929 *Accepted deanery of Canterbury*
- 1931 *Resigned because of ill health*
- 1934 *Became canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, London*
- 1937 *Elected lord rector of University of Glasgow; died October 31*

DICK SHEPPARD—as Hugh Richard Lawrie Sheppard was popularly known—thoroughly shattered the image most Englishmen had of a typical Anglican churchman. In his churches class distinctions disappeared. He beautified the typically drab church interiors and threw open ecclesiastical doors to the gales of new thought. In spite of his life-long ill health, he joked and laughed in his sermons and made the Christian faith real to men in every walk of life.

LIFE AND TIMES

Dick Sheppard was born September 2, 1880, in Windsor, England. He was the younger son of Canon Edgar Sheppard, subdean of the Chapels Royal. He spent his childhood in Windsor, attended Marlborough College, and studied in Cambridge. A fun-loving boy, he never lacked friends; he cared little for formal studies, but gave every indication of mental quickness.

After finishing college he was assigned as lay secretary to the bishop of Stepney. He worked with the poor and initiated programs for their benefit. More than anything, he wanted to help the downtrodden of the world. He struggled with the question of whether this could best be done within or without the structure of the institutional church; for Sheppard, that was no easy issue to resolve.

Finally, in the light of his own experience and the wise counsel of others, he determined to become a part of the institutional life of the Church of England. In 1906 he went to Cuddesdon College to study theology. The following year he was ordained to the post of chaplain at Oxford House, Bethnal Green; two years later he became head of Oxford House. In this post he initiated creative ministries to all classes. He hurried about the houses of the poor cheerfully bearing a message of comfort and hope. Increasingly, he chafed under the image of a church caring more for personal security than for the needs of the masses.

Never a man of robust health, Sheppard had a physical breakdown in 1911 which caused him to resign his position at Oxford House. After convalescence he became curate of St. George's, Hanover Square in London, in charge of St. Mary's, Bourdon Street. His ideas concerning what a church should be gradually took shape, and he worked incessantly at implementing them. Soon his ability and personality gained the attention of church superiors. When St. Martin-in-the-Fields became open, he was appointed vicar. The church, situated in the heart of downtown London, gave Sheppard a national, and in some ways, a world pulpit.

He had a vivid image of the kind of church he wanted St. Martin's to become. On his first Sunday at St. Martin's he declared to the people his vision of "a great and splendid church standing in the greatest square of the greatest city of the world":

I stood on the west steps, and saw what this church would be to the life of the people. There passed me, into its warm inside, hundreds and hundreds of all sorts of people, going up to the temple of their Lord, with all their difficulties, trials and sorrows. I saw it full of people dropping in at all hours of the day and night. It was never dark, it was lighted all night and all day, and often tired bits of humanity swept in. And I said to them as they passed, "Where are you going?" And they said only one thing. "This is our home. This is where we are going to learn of the love of Jesus Christ. This is the altar of our Lord, where all our peace lies. This is St. Martin's." It was all reverent and full of love and they never pushed me behind a pillar because I was poor.¹

Sheppard labored to make this dream come true. He was impatient with what churches had been and wanted his church to be different. He declared:

It is not the Church's function to be content when it has taught men to be hardy and friendly and sociable. I yield to none in the desire that Christians should "be kind to Granny and the cat." It is highly important that they should, and they are not good Christians unless they are, but kindness is only one of the gracious implications and fruits that flow from discipleship and discipline. Others are infinitely harder to fulfil since they entail the highest of all preferments—the Cross—of a disciple who believes, but cannot always be confident in believing that Resurrection follows, and that suffering will not prove to have been in vain.²

In a striking phrase, Sheppard once said that the church often failed because it loved the souls of people but not people themselves. Sheppard had no patience with those who cared not whether people had the chance of a decent earthly existence, so long as they held the catholic faith or had good prospects of heaven. He wanted the church to become vitally related to the issues of the current world. But he did not want the church to

1. Hazel Tourtel, *St. Martin-in-the-Fields: A Short History* (a booklet prepared by the parish historian of St. Martin-in-the-Fields), p. 25.

2. *Dick Sheppard by His Friends* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), pp. 28–29. Used by permission.

become an advocate of any particular scheme, nor did he want the church to lose itself in worldliness.

Many things were done at St. Martin's to make it the kind of church Sheppard envisioned. Reserved pews became a thing of the past, and people could come and sit wherever they wanted. Parts of the church were turned into overnight lodging for persons with no other place to go. The canteen was open to provide hot nourishing meals for workers in the area. A strong visitation program was introduced to contact each person living in the vicinity of the church and to let him know of the care and concern of St. Martin's. People were put to work both within the framework of the church institution and in the community. Parties were held to bring life and laughter to the congregation.

Unique services of worship were instituted. A special service in the afternoon for military men during the war proved a great success. Saturday afternoon music concerts were held. Perhaps the most exemplary service of the church was the "people's service" on Sunday afternoon:

Every Sunday afternoon the church was packed with all sorts and kinds of people, mostly "tired bits of humanity, coming to learn something of the love of Jesus Christ." When all the pews were filled, they sat wherever they could find room – on the floor, on the pulpit steps, on the step of the Communion rail, and those who found nowhere to sit just stood. The music was provided by a Guards band in the Chancel, and the service consisted of hymns, prayers, a lesson, and a very simple talk, in which Christianity was related to everyday life. . . . About 50 per cent of the Confirmation candidates every year were people who had first learnt through the Peoples' Service what the love of God meant and that it was concerned with daily life, and they came to attend the ordinary services of the church because of what they found on Sunday afternoons.³

In order to reach people Sheppard utilized drama, radio broadcasts, and newspapers. *St. Martin's Review*, the church paper, attained international circulation. He pioneered in radio broadcasting; in drama, he frequently participated as one of the actors. George Bernard Shaw, an admirer of Sheppard, said

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 146–47.

that he was a splendid actor and could have carved a great career for himself on the stage.

Apparently Sheppard achieved much of his ideal for St. Martin's. R. Ellis Roberts described the church as follows:

St. Martin's Church became the church of the soldiers and the down-and-outs; the church of the classes and the masses; the church of fellowship and of privacy; the church for the cheerful and the church for the desperate; the church for the healthy and the sick; of the young and the old. It was the church in which the congregation was no more shocked at hearing the minister pray for the street-walkers than pray for school-teachers, for crooks than for the clergy, for blackguards than for bishops; no more shocked than when the Vicar laughed and told a funny story in the pulpit. It became a refuge for the unhappy, and the home of the homeless. In short, it was a Christian church.⁴

Plagued by ill health, Sheppard resigned St. Martin's in 1926. He wrote *The Impatience of a Parson* while in semiretirement—a book which rattled the complacency of the Anglican church. In 1929 he accepted the deanery of Canterbury and served there until 1931 when he was again forced to resign because of ill health. In 1934, after his health improved, he became canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. In 1937 he was elected lord rector of Glasgow University; in running for this office he defeated several notable candidates, among them, Winston Churchill. He lost his long battle with illness; death claimed him on October 31, 1937.

His last months were not happy. His friends were greatly distressed to see the usually hopeful, loving, enthusiastic Sheppard so tired, so broken. Then, only a few weeks before his death, his wife left him. For several days he was swept into utter confusion and felt that he could never preach again. He had based his ministry upon love, and now he was defeated at the very point of his faith.

Gradually, however, his friends were able to reestablish contact with him, and he resumed his gracious ministry to others not nearly so much in need as he was. The day before he died, his wife called him and asked to be allowed to come

4. Richard Ellis Roberts, *H. R. L. Sheppard: Life and Letters* (London: John Murray, 1942), p. 93.

back to him. It was never to be; the next day, Sheppard was dead.⁵

His life had been one long crusade. And yet he was not the typical crusader—harsh, antagonistic, and combative. Though he stood for many of the things advocated by his friend, Studdert Kennedy, he approached life in a far different way. His main emphases differed from Studdert Kennedy's: where his friend stressed the economic aspects of social injustice, Sheppard emphasized the peace issue.

During World War I Sheppard had served at the front on a temporary assignment as a chaplain. His three months there planted such distaste in his life for war that he spent much of his energies in the succeeding years working for peace. Not that he had an exclusive interest in war—any practice galled him that ground men into the dust and robbed them of their heritage to be human. But war was the issue of gravest concern to him. He helped found the Peace Pledge Union and led many pacifist demonstrations in Great Britain. He instituted program after program to accustom people to the idea of pacifism. He could not tolerate war: in *The Impatience of a Parson* he wrote, "War cannot be reconciled with Christianity: there is no such thing as a Christian war."⁶ To him pacifism was an ardent adventure; he did not know if it would work, but he felt that it was worth the effort.

Sheppard was an amazing minister: as a churchman, he was deeply critical of the faults of the church; as a man of wealth and culture, he sided with the poor; plagued by ill health, he led a robust life. He left his mark upon his church, upon England, and upon the world.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Ernest Jeffs heard Sheppard early in his ministry and wrote these impressions of him:

I heard him once or twice in those early days. My recollection is that I prophesied one of two destinies for this young rebel. I thought he might continue his rebellion and either inspire a big new social movement in

5. Ibid., pp. 328-29, 333.

6. H. R. L. Sheppard, *The Impatience of a Parson* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), p. 52.

the Church of England or gradually be blanketed and silenced by the pressure of the machine, the institution.

And at the same time another possibility came into my mind. This young clergyman had such pleasant manners and such an engaging appearance and personality that I thought I saw Success and Promotion written ominously across his brow. The Church of England is kind to well-mannered and gentlemanly young clerics. . . .

Well, young Mr. Sheppard is now the Very Reverend Dr. Sheppard, Dean of Canterbury. That part of my prophecy has been fulfilled. But I am only too happy to add that this promotion has not been bought at the price of any retreat or betrayal. "Dick" Sheppard is now what he always was: a fearless critic of cold and conservative institutionalism in the Church, and of time-honored injustice and inequalities in the State.⁷

Jeffs's analysis of Dick Sheppard's career also serves as a good introduction to his preaching. Sheppard's kindly spirit was reflected in his sermons, and many critics accused him of sentimentalism. It is true that many of his sermon illustrations were stories with emotional appeal. His manner of speaking was marked by kindness and understanding; when he spoke on the radio, he imagined himself speaking to a lonely person sitting by the fireside.

But there was another quality to his preaching, one just as unmistakable—Sheppard was an eager, impetuous preacher, given to action rather than reflection. He was impatient with conditions as they were and his preaching reflected his impatience. He was possessed by a passion for social justice and fought in his sermons, as in his life, for what he believed. There was nothing of "soothing sentimentalism" in the themes of his preaching, no matter how much some of his illustrations might have offended his sterner hearers. It is true that his church was packed with those who loved the warmth and friendliness of his style—people who were tired and exhausted with modern life, and who sought fortitude from the sermons of Dick Sheppard. But many came to hear him preach because of his denunciation of a dead ecclesiasticism that did not involve itself with the practical needs of suffering humanity.

Characteristically, Sheppard listed as the one text he would

7. Ernest H. Jeffs, *Princes of the Modern Pulpit in England* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, n.d.), pp. 274–75.

preach if he could preach no other, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; but he never forgot the social implications of that text when preached in an urban and industrialized culture. Ernest Jeffs summarized Sheppard's kind of preaching in a penetrating paragraph:

Is Dr. Sheppard a great preacher? Not by the ordinary standards of criticism. This simple, coaxing, colloquial style is not what we have in mind when we call up memories of the princes of the pulpit. Yet there is no preacher to-day who does with greater effectiveness two of the primary things for which preaching exists: first, to comfort and strengthen, second, to pierce home to conscience.⁸

Sheppard's sermons are characterized by humor—he almost always opened his sermons with a joke or a humorous story—personal application, and a pietistic spirit. The personal touch is strong in these sermons; and his application of the gospel to the problems of modern life, if not profound, is at least realistic. Much of this realism in his preaching came from his understanding of people, particularly urban people. Sheppard must not be thought of as the amiable, easygoing, full-of-good-humor country parson, indulging himself in sentimental stories. As a matter of fact, Sheppard was not at all fond of the country:

I have been told that Sheppard had little love of natural beauty or the country; his imagination was fed by humanity; he had the rare capacity of making real to himself the personalities of others. . . . He saw the misery of people so clearly, often more clearly than they felt it themselves, that he was himself incapable of rest while it remained. He foresaw the horrors of war so plainly that he could not be quiet even for a day when something, however little it seemed to avail, could be done to avert them.⁹

Sheppard was not at his best in a pulpit like St. Paul's, where the speaker was remote from his hearers; he was most effective in a hall where the audience and the speaker were close to-

8. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

9. *Dick Sheppard by His Friends*, pp. 22-23.

gether and the speaker became part of the whole. There he had an uncanny ability to enter into the spirit of the group and to speak to men as if they were listening to their own consciences speak. All of his friends who have sought to describe his personality mention this characteristic, a certain mysterious ability of his personality to enter into the devotion and affection of persons "of the most diverse kinds in an incredibly short space of time."¹⁰

Sheppard was the first famous radio preacher in England. His successes as a broadcaster were due to his sympathetic imagination and his desire to present the gospel simply and understandably. In every sermon he appealed directly to the individual listener, as if Dick Sheppard were talking to a single person rather than to a vast audience. His subtle mingling of humor and sharp visual imagery gave his words a reality which more complex sermons would have lacked. These same qualities can be seen in his printed sermons. This example of his use of humor occurred in a radio broadcast as he described the vanity of man:

There was once a fashionable lady who went to a photographer. She was plain but she thought she was beautiful. Said she to the photographer, "Young man, mind you do me justice," to which he replied, "Madame, it is not justice but mercy you need!"¹¹

Dick Sheppard has not been regarded as a doctrinal preacher, yet in his own pulpit he frequently preached on doctrinal texts and was particularly fond of preaching on the articles of the creed — what he called "the gospel on parade":

There is our gospel on parade. No I certainly cannot understand it, yet I can love and admire it just because I cannot understand it; it is because every phrase has cost so much, and I can believe, as I most certainly do, that it describes infinity as perfectly as any finite words are able. . . .

Criticize the creeds as you like, only please don't call them impractical. They are the manuscripts which pro-

10. Ibid., p. 22.

11. Halford E. Luccock, ed., *The Best of Dick Sheppard* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1951), p. 27.

duce the enthralling song of the love of Jesus, and within their seeming dullness keep the full wealth of that song intact.¹²

Yet Sheppard was sometimes criticized for his lack of interest in theology:

I was taken to task lately by the editor of a Church Journal . . . for confessing that I was uninterested in theology. . . . I have nothing but respect for theology, provided it be not confused with revelation, and provided we remember that there is no such thing as a final theology any more than there is a final astronomy; but I confess that I am heartily tired of the majority of theologians.¹³

Sheppard stated his philosophy of preaching in his book *The Human Parson*:

He need not, thank God, be an orator. . . . It would be much better to let any tendency to slang, elaborated humor or shouting be vigorously repressed. . . . His words are for those who are hard pressed in the difficult business of Christian living.¹⁴

In the same book Sheppard advised preachers to leave off sarcasm and bitterness and avoid "mere denunciation" in the pulpit. According to Sheppard, the preacher should seek to apply the gospel's message of hope to needy humanity, and he had better do it in a language that can be understood: "The preacher must talk of things he knows something about and in a language that the people can understand. . . . Some of the old words had better be left unsaid."¹⁵

One writer summarized his gifts as a preacher:

Receptivity, imagination, the concentrated awareness of the artist and the artist's mastery of his materials—in these attributes lay his force. His materials were the

12. *Dick Sheppard by His Friends*, pp. 141-42.

13. Sheppard, *The Impatience of a Parson*, p. 75.

14. H. R. L. Sheppard, *The Human Parson* (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1929), p. 76.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

common stock of humanity, the hopes and fears and desires of mankind, and he gathered them into himself and sought to project them, often impatiently, in a co-ordinated vision of a world made perfect.¹⁶

The sermons of Dick Sheppard will not be remembered, however, for their style or their homiletical skills, nor even for their prophetic criticisms of the church; other men have expressed as well their frustration with institutionalism. Perhaps Ernest Jeffs provided the best reason for remembering the sermons of Dick Sheppard:

But when all is said and done, it is not really Dean Sheppard's opinions that will give him his place in the pulpit history of this generation. He is not the first parson to be "impatient" of ecclesiastical limitations and traditions. But he is the first parson in a generation, perhaps in a century, to win millions of hearers by the sheer grace of his own Christian character and intention, shining through his spoken words so clearly that they have touched and inspired a whole nation. . . .

In him, more than in any other preacher of our time, the new glory of the pulpit is illustrated—not the glory of sublime oratory or profound thought, but the greater glory of the man who stands in the midst of the people, a friend and brother, pouring out his soul in the passion of service and love.¹⁷

16. *Dick Sheppard by His Friends*, pp. 12-13.

17. Jeffs, p. 282.

Sermons

MEETING TROUBLES HALF-WAY

I HOPE you will pardon me if I speak quite briefly to you this evening, and if I say only very simple things; because, much as one hates mentioning oneself, asthma not only causes a man to make noises like nothing on earth, except those made by another asthmatic, but it is also rather hard for him while it is on – it does not last long – to use his head. I want to talk to you about the evil of meeting our troubles half-way. There are a great many people, myself included, who are inclined to do that. Are you of the worrying sort? Do you get hot and bothered all the time, and about trifles, so that your friends and acquaintances who try to straighten things out for you have a very weary time?

There are many people who, even if the sky is clear, are perfectly persuaded that within half an hour or so terrible things will be rained upon their defenceless heads. They are perfectly certain that, although things seem all right at the moment, they will soon be all wrong. Such people are astonishingly hard to live with. There was a prize person in my youth who was an expert at expecting evil. I remember once that when told how well all her numerous offspring looked, she replied, "Yes, it is true they all look well at the moment, but I am quite certain little Jimmy will soon have the measles"! Seriously, I do want to suggest to you that to expect evil to happen, to look always for it, to be perpetually living in the terror of the future is one of the greatest menaces possible to the life of the individual and the peace of those with whom he has to do. Such an attitude is extraordinarily common. It makes life often very hard for ourselves, and that is bad enough, but sometimes it makes it almost impossible for those who have to live with us, and that is a great deal worse still.

There are men and women – husbands and wives – listening-in as I speak now, who, in spite of all their love for each other and their loyalty to each other, almost dread the hours that they still have to spend together, simply because, for one or the other, it will be worry, worry, worry all the time, and that is very near to nag, nag, nag.

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Of course, there are plenty of overwhelming troubles that will rend our hearts, occasions when we would be ashamed not to be upset and worried. A great outstanding disaster such as befell this country last week [the destruction of R101], the calamities of death and disease and unemployment, these happenings no man can accept unmoved; but to spend our lives, as some do, cataloguing and weighing the possible evils that the future may provide is just as futile as it is unchristian.

It is futile because half the calamities we worry about and expect never arrive. It is futile also because, if they do arrive, we shall have exhausted all our strength before they come, and have none left for the contest. It is futile because few troubles are as bad as those that we think about, say, in the watches of the night, when perspectives get all wrong. Well might another commandment be written which should run as follows: Thou shalt not meet thy troubles half-way. But this is what I really want to suggest to you to-night, that it is a wholly unloving and unchristian thing to do. "Be merry-hearted" were our Lord's own words. Be of good cheer! Be merry-hearted! Don't worry! Just put all your cares on to Him who loves you and cares for you.

Our Lord was always addressing Himself to the actual needs of ordinary wayfaring people. He passed our way. It was just as difficult for Him; nay, it was a good deal more difficult than we have any notion of. He knew that our difficulties have their phases and their limits, that sometimes they must bring us up to the limits of human endurance, but in facing His own difficulties He was carried along by a mighty and effective belief in His Father's good will. Thus He practised and counselled a divine and happy carelessness, and He left us an example of the one man of perfect poise who never, never was to be identified with worry or fright, or that kind of disintegrating fear which is so unlovely in us. "Don't worry," He says. "Be of good cheer."

Need we really get so hot and bothered and excited and worried about the possible evils of to-morrow? Maybe they will never arrive, but if they do, is it not possible for one who is trying to live as a Christian to believe that at least a sufficiency of strength will be given him for each trial as it arises? Time upon time we have known it in the past, things have threatened to happen which seemed intolerable. "If this goes, all goes," we have said. And yet the trouble has come down on to our broad shoulders, and we have had to bear it, you and your friends, you have had to bear it, and somehow you have got through it. For each emergency Christ's word is true. There is a supporting power in the heart of every man who is trying to live nobly, a power which he can bring out at need, and which will enable him to deal with the situation as it arises.

The man who understands the Kingdom of God is he who can bring out of his richly stored treasury just what he needs, things old or new, for each emergency as it comes. God is dealing today, even within the

hour of this Broadcast Service, with our troubles, the very troubles that may arise for us to-morrow. There is no meaning—is there?—in our prayers to-night unless they are meant for our help on Monday and Tuesday and throughout the week.

Surely our prayer as we contemplate the future may be something as big as this: Supposing this calamity does come (as sometimes I think it must come), well, then, Lord, if it be so, give me the strength to get through it and to bear it. Oh, my dears, it would be so lovely for those who live with us if now and then we made ourselves a little more care-free, and if now and then we believed that God was actually so watching over our lives, not always to save us from trouble, but to take us through trouble into the haven where He would have us be.

If one has faith and a little courage I don't believe it is ever going to be half as bad as we think it to be. And I believe also that in the heart of every difficult situation there is something which causes a man to say, "Now at last I understand what I never would have understood if it had not been for this thing which at one time I feared." In what remains to me to say I want to send a message only to one person, one in the beloved City of Canterbury, who may be listening-in. I think so. You are saying this: "Things have come out worse than they were ever expected, and life is so impossible now. It is more than I can bear. I cannot even attempt to say my prayers." My brother, do not try to say your prayers. Is not God as human as Jesus Christ, and do you think He would mind, do you think He would not understand? Let Him undertake for you. Would not the father sometimes just love to run and do the work for the child who is suffering? Don't mind about not being able to say your prayers, but you can breathe this prayer almost: "Undertake for me, for I just can't at the moment." What does this mean to-night, this very simple talk? It means just this. If you are a "worrier" try to give it up, because it does not help, and it makes life difficult for you and for others. If you fear for the future, remember that the future is not likely to be half as bad as you think, and that if evils do come hurling down upon you there is being prepared for you now just the strength that you will need to confront them.

TAKING JESUS SERIOUSLY

"Oh give me the comfort of thy help again, and establish me with thy free spirit" (Psalm 51:12).

MY FRIENDS—if I may call you so—many people to-day, and good people, too, not people who should be thought about as hardening their hearts towards God, have ceased to think of our Christian Churches as having much to offer to a world which on its own confession has hopelessly lost its way. They know, of course, how serviceable our Churches are to the religious-minded, and to those who need what is called the consolation of religion. And I thank God for those words of Jesus Christ: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." There are no words that mean so much to me, except, perhaps, one other sentence of His, spoken this time on the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—bringing Him down even to my poor level.

But these many people who are critical of us are not looking for the Christianity of the Churches to make any really tremendous contribution to the Salvation of the world's soul. It looks, for instance, as if our civilization would go up in the smoke of another world-war long before Christianity takes possession, travelling at its present rate. And we of the Churches, let us own it—I am not going to be merely critical to-night, but let us own it—we are not always the most virile and likeable people, are we? We are not characteristically gay people. There is little Franciscan joy about us. We are not experts in a loving religion as our Master was, by which I do not mean sentimental affection, but deep, strong, understanding, tender love. We are not always fierce to denounce injustice. We are not always very charitable even to the members of our own communion. And what I think sometimes does haunt me is this, that we are criticised, not because we are so like our Master—oh dear, no—but because we are so unlike Him.

I know, of course, that the so-called man in the street often says foolish, uninformed, and cruel things about professing Christians. He is not very interested in our Churches, and when people are not interested they remain uninformed, but we do not need him to tell us what our real trouble is, we know it perfectly well. It is this, that we do not take Jesus Christ seriously. I am addressing myself just as much as I am addressing you. If He were to come amongst us again, who would be more surprised, He at our values, or we at His? I think He would have a very bad "Church press." Would He be at home in our

Churches and be interested in the domestic problems which we so love to discuss?—and generally at the end of our meetings all we do is to arrange the date of our next! Would He acquiesce, for instance, in our decision that while war was wholly undesirable, it might be necessary to kill our neighbour if the government of the day told us to do so, or would He acquiesce in the idea that for reasons of Church polity it might be impossible for those who hold Him in equal love and reverence to meet together at His fellowship meal—the one service that He Himself instituted, the Lord's service, and not ours?

What, in fact, should we do if He appeared in our society with any claim to anything but the right to console us, to heal our personal ills, and to make us all comfortable again? I wonder. As a revealer of the art of actual living, as the master of the craft of life—for that is what He is and was—should we recognize Him, or would Church and State combine against Him as a dangerous fellow, One to be dealt with in the old Judean way, to be bullied, to be betrayed, to be crucified? I wonder.

Some time ago a Church dignitary, addressing a public meeting, said that the Church was the only body that could stand between nation and nation, and class and class, crying: "Sirs, ye are brethren." Certainly, that ought to be true. But it is disastrously untrue. If it were done, the first retort would be: "First go and be reconciled to thy brother." That is too obvious. The world at the moment—and it is not any religious world—has genuine excuse for discounting the Gospel of Christ, and it will, I am convinced, continue to withhold its belief that God sent Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the World until it sees us caring above everything for the mind of Christ, and daring not only to take Him seriously, but if needs be to bend our very Churches to the breaking-point if by so doing we may give His children more love and more food and more charity.

You will not accuse me of sentimentalism, I hope, if I say that I believe anyone who to-day dares to be sensitive to the cry of mankind—and, oh, what it costs to be sensitive to that cry!—will almost hear the baffled, troubled world crying aloud, not for Churches, but for the unedited Gospel of Jesus Christ, which even now would flood the world if we dared to offer it as He would wish it offered.

Is it impossible, unthinkable, ridiculous to pray that even in our time that very Church which has not yet arrived may arrive, wide in its charity as the love of God, which shall take its Lord seriously, and the members of which shall pledge themselves at least to attempt to be true to the divine wisdom that was once heard in the ways of Galilee? For the older I get—and I am getting a pretty old man now—the more certain I am that the actual way that Christ lived is the only way in which life is really possible.

Two things may I say? First, may I suggest that for many of us who are here, and who are spared sometimes the agony and always the difficulty of speaking on public platforms, after all there is only one

thing that actually makes known the Gospel, and that is the goodness of the individual. If only when we got home to-night they knew at home, because we were rather different, that we had been trying to draw near to our Lord, if only they could see that we were a little more thoughtful, courteous, kindly, and understanding, then, "Oh, my!" they would say, "there is something in this more than we thought there was."

Let me tell you a story, to my own shame indeed, just to illustrate the actual power of trying to live as Christ lived, and trying to sing the folk-song of His wisdom as one passes through life. Years ago, when I left Cambridge, I went to East London as a rather conceited and bumptious undergraduate, who thought that in a year or so he could do a lot for the so-called working classes. I soon found that they do a lot more for you. I thought of even being a member of Parliament, and I imagined—in that dreadful phrase—that I could "uplift the masses." Almost the first I had to tackle was a dear old gentleman who lived off the Bethnal Green Road, a man who could not have a drop without getting drunk. Things were going "round the corner" with him, and it was about as difficult for his wife as it could be. I went round as an undergraduate to talk with him. It was completely useless. Others of us went, with no result, except that we bored the old gentleman stiff. But, some months later, we heard the good news that everything had got happy, things were just splendid, and the wife was a happy woman again. I wondered what had happened. I knew that an old clergyman, a Mr. Strickland, of Bethnal Green, had been to see him, a clergyman who had, so I thought, no gifts at all like we undergraduates possessed. He wore a "beaver," and was not very attractive looking. Well, I called on my old friend. "Dad," I said, "tell me why things are all bright here again, why mother looks so happy." "Oh, well," he said, "Mr. Strickland used to come round day after day." I said: "Mr. Strickland! He hasn't much to say for himself, has he?" "No," was the reply, "it is quite true he doesn't say much, and sometimes I don't quite know what to say to him. But when he is gone I kind of say to myself that it seems as if Jesus of Nazareth had passed by."

My word! that taught me something. I think it might well be the ambition of all our lives that one day, possibly, most lovely of all, wife, or brother, or sister, or mother, or grannie, might say after we had left: "It seems as if Jesus of Nazareth had passed by." So when we talk, as we often do, a great deal about Church reform, and all the rest, and Reunion, and things that sometimes mean little to some of the younger people, quite naturally, let them please remember that they will count in an amazing way if they can take Jesus Christ back to their homes or their places of business.

And the second thing I want to say is this: that I believe we who have our place within the Church, and within the Churches, ought to consider what our own Church might give, not what it might get, that

the great Church we long for might arrive. Some years ago I organized a meeting at the Albert Hall on the whole question of Reunion. We had two magnificent speeches, one from a Free Church minister, and one from a dignitary of my own Church. They were applauded to the echo by a vast audience, who, not knowing how to read between the lines of ecclesiastical talking, thought everything was going splendidly, and so it seemed to be. But afterwards I happened to be in the speaker's room, and I heard both the speakers make a remark to their own particular followers. Said the Church dignitary to his: "I don't think I gave anything away, did I?" Said the Free Church minister to his: "I rather fancy I held my place all right, didn't I?" There is no hope whatsoever until each Church is prepared to give—to give something for the sake of the unity we so desire. It was once expedient that a man should die for the people. It might even be expedient that my Church or your Church should die for the people, and yet, may be, it would be a resurrection to a new and glorified opportunity of service.

After all, what is it that divides us? Really, it is rather difficult to remember. Nothing, at any rate, that makes for character. We worship one God, the Father Almighty, over all, through all, and in all; we adore together our Lord Jesus Christ, and are inspired by the Holy Spirit. We sing each other's hymns and say each other's prayers. Our differences are in Church order and Church polity. Of course, if matters of Church polity are of supreme importance, more vital to humanity than the Gospel, there is nothing more to be said. But are they? Would anyone dare to suggest that they were?

Some time ago I read a wonderful appeal addressed by a member of my Church to the Free Churches. I think it was Dr. Burroughs who wrote the appeal. It was based on the text I have chosen for this evening—the twelfth verse of the fifty-first Psalm. "There is a phrase," he wrote, "in Psalm 51 which one would wish to hear addressed, say, by your Church choir (that is, the Free Church) to mine, and then by mine to yours. They should be, as it were, two parts of the same choir facing each other together in one Church. You should begin, if you would, by saying: 'O give me the comfort of your help again,' and then should we make answer and say: 'And establish us with thy free spirit!' Then should the whole choir turn to the east and say together: 'Now will I teach thy way to the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.' After that the Gloria shall be said." Here I add, entirely on my own, not quoting Dr. Burroughs now: On the following Sunday, after careful and quiet and reverent preparation throughout the week, there should be a great celebration of the Holy Communion for all who desire to live nobly and are able to say: "Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief."

The Churches have lost the hearts of the people, not because they have preached Christ and He has been unacceptable, but because they have preached something less than the unedited Gospel of our

Lord, something much too small, and, let me add, at the same time much too complicated and elaborate, which in consequence has become peculiarly unattractive to those who believe, as indeed I do, that the beginning and end of Christianity is simply this, the following of Jesus Christ in incorruptness of living.

I do not suggest that if the Churches gave the full message of Jesus Christ they would be enthusiastically acclaimed by the people. I know this would not be so. They would probably be emptier than to-day, and many of their prophets would be stoned, for as Mr. Bernard Shaw says: "We do not like prophets until they are dead, and then we make tombs for them out of the stones which once we threw at them." When Christianity was perfectly presented "many went back and walked no more with Him." But I do suggest that the real issues would be raised, and there would be no longer opposition to institutional religion arising from what is good in human nature, which is so distressing a factor in the present situation. I fear to-day many people leave the Churches with an unsatisfied hunger in their souls. They come back and haunt the aisles about Christmas and Easter, but somehow it is so unlovely, and they cannot find simple faith in Christ.

May I end with one constructive suggestion—and, oh, dear, I do hope I have not seemed to be merely critical to-night. I would wish to enlist a new public for the renewal of organised Christianity—namely, the ordinary people who attend Churches with more or less regularity, and sincerely desire that Christianity should prevail, and yet, not unnaturally, are profoundly uninterested in and bewildered by the politics of religion. I should like to persuade them to pray more, to read more, to think more, and then to express their convictions without fear and without compromise. I believe that those of whom I speak—the out-and-out sort of people—have a great deal to offer, and are urgently needed to drive the Churches back upon realities and first principles. I doubt indeed if this can be done without their assistance, and I am certain if there ever is to be a revival of religion in our day it can only come by the help of those whom I call again the out-and-out people. The beginnings of Christian reconstruction will not arrive by dissemination of facts and pamphlets about what is wrong, but by ardent souls—souls who really think and care—going straight to the point, without undue academic discussion, and without over-much reverence for documents that originated in the heads of those who missed their vocation when they turned from the profession of the law. Very often, my friends, the point of view of the average decent citizen, whom I wish to encourage to have his say in matters ecclesiastical, is more Christian than that of the specialist and the expert. He could settle most of the problems that agitate and divide the Churches in a week, and really I begin to think that he would settle them in a Christian spirit, if not to the satisfaction of the contending

parties, and a settlement would be reached which would really be wholly to the good.

An anonymous writer in the *Quarterly Review*, discussing the problem of Christian reunion, says: "Had the question of reunion been left in lay hands it would have been easily settled. As it is, it has been complicated and is at a deadlock because considerations foreign to religion as a whole have been imported into it." On the whole, with all the likely exaggerations and complications that would ensue, I should wish to see the laity in every Church thoroughly discontented. I beseech the faithful people in their own Churches to be discontented with things as they are. I want them first of all to be dissatisfied with their Churches, and indeed with some of their accepted leaders, to be gravely uncomfortable with what is—for though it is immeasurably better than what was, it is by no means as good as what ought to be.

I hope before I die to be able to watch the laity driven by a new spirit and temper in all sorts of directions to the dismay of some of the powers that be. I want the average professing Christian to break out—that is what our Lord wanted men to do. He did not try to break them in, but to get them to break out—and to ask awkward questions, the chief of which should be this: "And, now, what would our Lord have done about it?" I long for the laity of all denominations to show something of that spontaneous and amiable anarchy which fell like dew from on high on the Chaplains to the Forces during the Great War, and caused them to forget as often as possible to which branch of the Christian Church they belonged, in the interests, as I believe, of the souls and bodies of men and of the glory of God the Father.

One final thing. I desire of all amiable anarchists—to whom alone, I fancy, we must look for real revival—to believe that there is nothing that need prevent the return to the Churches of our day of that splendour of spiritual achievement that was the glory of the Church of Christ in that far-off time when a ludicrously small company of people of the out-and-out sort were apprehended by the spirit of Jesus and turned the world upside down. It needs but a generation of reinvigorated Christians to prove that what sometimes looks like the twilight on the face of the world before the utter darkness of night is in reality the twilight that ushers in the morning hour and heralds the dawn.

If it is possible, may I speak only to those who were at our Communion Service this morning? I want you to look on our lovely, simple service, which was in no sense a "demonstration," as an act of fellowship, done because in all sincerity we thought our Lord would like it to be so. Why did I come? First, because you asked me; but, secondly, because my conscience would not allow me to stay away from the privilege that you have done me, and if to-day—to-night too—we could feel that we were letting the powers that be know that the time had come when it is impossible any more to uphold the barriers that keep Christians from worshipping one with another, if in all respect and

reverence we could let them know — the leaders — that it simply cannot be tolerated any more, unless Christianity is to cease to be, then I think we might go home to-night — not complacently, God forbid! — not thinking that we were better than our neighbours who do not agree with us, or that we alone held the secret of the Lord's call, but we could go home thoughtfully saying on our way:

“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

THE ALL-SUFFICING CHRIST

WILL you please forgive me if I preface my address with one or two personal remarks. I would like to say how proud and glad I am to be allowed to speak to you, my brothers and sisters, on this great occasion this afternoon. There are many reasons which I might bore you with — but I will not — as to why I do not feel not at home in your presence. Both my best beloved and most noble mother-in-law and father-in-law, both of whom have died within the last year, were Congregationalists, and often I am glad and happy to say I have worshipped with them in their Church and took Communion with God and with them at their table, and I am also equally proud to say that they have had Communion with God and with me in my English Church. For I recognize nothing that separates them from me, you from me, I from you, that makes for character; nothing that makes for character separates us, and it is, I venture to say, perfectly disastrous that in these days there should be any kind of man-made arguments allowed to keep us apart. But of all that I must not speak now.

We have met here to strengthen our hearts and to worship our God, and that is our main and our only desire for this afternoon.

A man who is doing a great work overseas has written of his experience in these words:

“When I first went to India I was trying to hold a line that stretched

here from Genesis to Revelation, on to Western civilization and to the Western Christian Church. I found myself bobbing up and down that line, fighting behind Moses and Jesus, behind the whole Western civilization and the Christian Church. I was worried; there was no well-defined issue. I found the battle almost invariably pitched at one of these three places—the Old Testament, Western civilization or the Christian Church. I had the ill-defined but instinctive feeling that the heart of the matter was being left out, and then I saw that I could and should shorten my line, that I could take my stand for Christ and before that non-Christian world, refuse to know any save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The sheer stress and storm of things had driven me to a place that I could hold. Then I saw that there is where I should have been all the time. I saw that the gospel lies in the person of Jesus, that He Himself is the good news, that my own task was to live and present it. My task was simplified.”

My brothers and sisters, in the midst of this exciting and everchanging world, one thing, one Person only remains—one Person in whom by general consent no change is required. Men do not blame us, we ministers of religion, for being like Christ; they worry about us and complain because we are so unlike. No one desires the modification of Jesus Christ. Only a tiny little band of very inarticulate disturbed people dare to criticize our Lord. He is to the world still the one haunting Person whom nobody desires to alter. He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. He stands in this changing world like a rock in our surging sea. For a time when the tide flows, the waves beat up against it; they cover Him with their foam, as once upon a time His enemies covered Him with their spit. But the storm at length subsides, the waters fall back, and He is still found to be there. Generation after generation His prophecy is fulfilled; His wisdom justified. Nothing is discovered in the whole realm of reality that exceeds the wonder and teaching of Jesus Christ—nothing is found so attractive, charming, divine, compelling, so entirely “on the spot” (if I may use that phrase) as the love of Christ. Nothing is found in the realms of reality in advance of His teaching; He remains what He is, not because of any official status given to Him by this or that Church, but because He is what He is. He beats all our definitions; we cannot define Him, but we know Him for what He is. Jesus speaks, and things happen; Jesus moves, and men begin to love; Jesus stands at the well with a woman, and tells life’s deepest secret; He does not compel her, He is just there, and the whole motive of that life is changed for ever after.

He is the example to which every man in his best moments would aspire; the gates of hell will not prevail against Him. He is for ever being born again in some hidden corner of this busy world. Yet humble shepherds come to sing His praises; wise men and kings come from the East to see Him, and no Herod can destroy. He is driven into exile for a time, first from one country, then from another, first from philos-

ophy, then from science—so they say—first from the poor and ignorant, then from the mighty, but always the stone is rolled away and Jesus is alive again. Why? Because, I think, we meet Him in our homes and in our hearts. Alas, although I have taken services in different parts of Australia and Canada, I have never been the fine man the missionary is, or lived overseas working there. But the whole secret of our ministry, so far as I know it, whether it be in the mission field as we call it, or in the mission field at home, is not to argue the case of life but to present it, to remember always—especially when you talk in a pulpit, and I know how tired you parsons get of talking—that what you are, even in the pulpit, speaks louder than anything you may say. It is not eloquence men want; they are fed up with eloquence and have been fed on it ever since 1914. If you want to know who will hold the people to-day, it is only a very simple man or woman who has Christ in his or her heart and dares to confess that joy that Christ always brings.

Why do we know all this? Do you remember Zacchaeus, the tiny man who climbed up the sycamore tree in order that he might see our Lord? Do you remember the call, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down for to-day I must abide in thy house"? I always imagine the little man sliding down the tree as fast as he could. To-day, after two thousand years, we shall see our Lord historically only by seeing Him in our own house, and if we who are here are not loved and justly loved at home, we have nothing to offer the world outside. God preserve my two daughters from ever marrying a minister or a religious man who does not love at home. There is nothing so dreadful as the people who talk on platforms and who, if you went home with them, you would find that they have killed the romance of the women who live with them there, and have forgotten the meaning of life. If we do not meet Christ in our home, and those we live with do not meet Him, it is better to give up our Christian evangelism, for all the good it will do. The life of Jesus is what we seek in the gospel and do not find because that is not its origin. Its object is our life, not His; our salvation, not His salvation, for neither is there salvation for us who profess to be His disciples in any other name save in the name of Jesus Christ.

In order to know how He lives, He who would in himself live in me, "nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The life of Christ brings together truths concerning the chief good and the laws of our being which wander idle and forlorn over the surface of the modern world. It collects scattered rays of light which in the first days of creation were poured over the whole face of nature, into certain notable witnesses, in the firmament of the heavens to rule over the day and the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.

Our Saviour has in scripture all those great names of moral excellence, discovered by philosophers and by scientists—light, truth, wisdom, divine glory. The life was manifested and we have seen Him,

and we can do no better than to shorten our line and take our stand—however much men may laugh—by the side of Christ. It is not back to realism, but up to God, with, through and by Jesus Christ. There is something much more. Our Lord is available, even for us. They may laugh and say He is not; they may riddle our halting little arguments through and through with their clever and pungent sayings, and we need to read and think of our best to give the best answer we can to the case that is brought against us. They may say we have invented all this friendliness of God to make life possible in a world that is wholly impossible, to help us to get through the serious operation of living. Let it go at that, if they wish it, but only remember that sometimes we may show light in our souls. "Whereas I was blind, now I see." Hold on to that, and in God's name, if you ever meet the simple person who believes, do nothing, say nothing, act nothing to make that belief harder for him or for her.

Yes, it really is the out-and-out simplicity of a man who is trying to live as he thinks Christ would wish him to live that alone will count in this amazingly depressing as well as invigorating world. Therefore, my friends, I want, if I may, to preach Christ to you to-night, and let me remind you of the words with which I began: "I found myself bobbing up and down the line; I found the battle almost invariably pitched at one of these three places, the Old Testament, Western civilization or the Western Church; I had the ill-defined but instinctive feeling that the heart of the matter was being left out, and then I saw that I could and should shorten my line; that I could take my stand for Christ." I am sure that that is the only thing that matters still. "Yes," you answer, and so naturally, "but what do these old evangelical exhortations about standing for Christ mean? Are we not there now?" We are as near Christ to-day as we can ever be in this world. Are we not standing by Him and with Him in far-flung places; are we not standing there by His side? Which of us would dare to answer, "Yes, I am"? But our Christian hope lies in our deep belief that He is standing by us. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." That is what God has done for us, but in our burning, passionate desire to make Christ compelling to simple people, let us be a little bit careful of the words we use. Do not let us make our religion too political, too modern, too simple. Let it be cheap as we desire bread to be cheap, but not diluted with stuff making it merely attractive to the taste. Be careful of the words you use—lover, friend, companion, father. All these words are true, but the "Bon Dieu" of the French and the "Good God" of the English are morally lax, and are much less than the God we worship, who is Judge, Lord, King, a Good Master, but Master always. He will summon us to assist Him in His work and mighty purposes, but the great purposes even of our salvation do not depend on our paltry contribution.

Not long ago an eminent man said that the scientist of to-day has the belief in a God, but in a God too great to be confined within the creed of theologians. In saying what is true he spoke inaccurately; what the creed says of God is that He is the Maker of heaven and of earth and of all things visible and invisible, anticipating all that science might discover and claiming it for Him. That is why Studdert Kennedy, of blessed memory, used often to say in his enthusiastic and magnificent way that it would be well for us sometimes to face this and to shout our cry to the roll of drums. We may think of a creed as a halting attempt to explain what can never be explicable; there is no heavenly language. Half the mistakes come from thinking that we can put heavenly things into words. These things can only be the outward and visible forms which do the best they can for the inward and spiritual Christ.

It is true that majesty is not the only element in the Christian conception of God. The very heart of the Christian gospel is the proclamation of God is love, but, as Dr. William Temple has said, that proclamation is meaningless unless the word "God" stands for something other than God. To say that love is love is to say nothing; to say that somewhere or other there exists a tender, amiable, gentle Jesus, meek and mild, One who would like to see us doing just the nice things we are doing now and going on as we are now because we are all such nice people, is not good enough, and it is the more terrible in that that teaching cannot save the soul of a tom-tit. To say that the controlling power of this vast universe is love is to say something so tremendous and infinite in its significance that we must expect to doubt it sometimes ourselves, as we must always doubt great terrific truths at times, and we must expect others to do what we have at times. Yet that is the gospel, the assertion of the perfect union of absolute power and absolute love in one creative reality. We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ our Lord. That is where the whole thing becomes one. That is exalting and humbling, because it will cause us to run to our Father with trembling shouts of joy and trembling fear, because when we fail and fall, He stands; when we perish, He lives; when we alter and change, He changes not; when we sin, He forgives; when we decide wrongly, He reigns.

He is the alpha and omega, which is, was and is to come, the Almighty. "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son." And in this last phrase God Himself, so we dare to believe, bends right down and speaks to us then as lover, companion, friend, brother, and throws aside His majesty.

Why have we given Him so much prestige and state? Why did we not allow Christ to explain Himself? Men will always respond to the

Christ if they see Him truly. Here He throws His majesty to the wind. Whoever was won by majesty, proclamation and declaration? "I come in the little things," says the Lord, and coming thus He not only stands by us but enables us to stand by Him.

We recognize and rejoice in God the Father Almighty, who from the beginning of the world has stood at the door of the human heart. Having met Him we may love Him and make ourselves firm, strong and wise in love so that we might go to the farthest ends of the earth, not to argue God's case, but to present Him with the spirit of Jesus Christ.

My friends, I have finished. We need not really talk a great deal about our religion. We need not feel we have to get into argument with our host when we have had lunch or dinner with him, so as to make him a better Christian. He will know after we have been half an hour with him in the smoking-room, or anywhere else, whether we are a follower of our Lord or not. He will see something of which we shall be unaware, if once we have met Christ; it will not be we ourselves, but it will be Christ in us.

I wish I had words in which I could try to explain the power that God offers to us. You who have many of you been much longer in His service than I have, will know full well that He never fails us in the hour of emergency if we trust Him. We are asked only one thing; not to be successes. Thank God we are not asked that. What a terrible thing if we were, we ministers of religion in all parts of the world. If we had to say that we had done so many fine things and saved so many people, what a number we should have to say we had missed out! All that we are asked is, so far as we can in difficult times and difficult days, in wealth or poverty, illness or happiness, to be alive unto God. That is all.

I think it is the most wonderful thing in the world to be a minister of the Christian gospel, because we know that if ever we are able to help, it is only because Christ has been able to make His way through us, and when we have failed and fallen, we know that we have Him again to stand by our side and give us fresh hope and fresh courage.

All I have tried to do this afternoon, all humbly in your presence – and I say that in sincerity and not as the kind of thing that ought to be said from the pulpit – is to encourage you and myself in not spreading our energies too far afield, not attempting to have too many great programmes of every kind for the alleviation of everything and every kind possible except ourselves, but as we love our God in Christ, to take our stand in Christ, for Christ and by Christ. Christ in our hearts, lives, eyes, souls. That is all.

THE GREAT CERTAINTIES

“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21).

IF ST. PAUL were to preach to this generation he would not say, I think, as we often do, “O dear, O dear, what is the world coming to?” He would rather say, “I know what has come to the world. Christ Jesus the Son of God has come, who by His passion and resurrection has opened unto us the gate of everlasting life. Therefore”—so I think he would continue—“be not afraid, go on with courage, press forward. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

It is to the great certainties that we desire to return just now, especially with the memory of Easter still in our minds, and the greatest certainty of all is surely this, that an act of eternal significance has happened, and one vital for the salvation of the world.

The prophets of old, as you will remember, looked forward with aching heart and straining eyes to the day of the Lord. Their task was to throw up in the desert a highway for their God, often enough a pretty dreary business. Prophets have a miserable time as a rule. Peradventure one day in the future He would come, the long expected Saviour, come in triumph, and then every valley should be exalted and every mountain and hill made low, and the crooked ways should be made straight and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord should be revealed and all flesh should see it together.

They had to live in that dream, it kept them alive and alert, but it was a dream of some future day. Meanwhile, obviously the Kingdom tarried. The days were evil. “The grass withereth . . . surely the people is grass.” It was wonderful for those who were able to accept the great hope, but hard must it have been for many.

Then Jesus of Nazareth came, and He did not say, “Look forward,” but He announced the arrival of the day of the Lord to which all prophecy had pointed. “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” He declared that the Kingdom of God had come, and that it only remained for timid men to receive what the counsel of God had preordained from the very beginning of the world. The way indeed would be hard, but now it was open to the sons of men. You must not wonder that those of us who are able to receive it and be grateful

for it love to declare it from our pulpits. You remember our Lord's reply to that timid disciple who asked, "We know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" After the resurrection they understood, dimly at first, where He had gone, and He who is the Resurrection and the Life becomes also to them the Way and the Truth.

That is how the gospel certainly was at first proclaimed. It was not the offer of some vague though rather beautiful ideal which would satisfy the artistic longing of poets and dreamers and mystics who wanted to escape from plain, obvious facts. It was not in that form that it was preached. It was an announcement, a proclamation, a declaration that something of eternal significance had actually happened. That is the cause of the boldness of the first preaching of the gospel. A supreme act of Almighty God—almighty because all-loving—had taken place within the bounds of space and time, which would be of everlasting relevance to the world of His creation. That Bad Friday had to be reversed, and so when everything seemed shattered under the heavy weight of the cross, the day of blackness turned to triumph for those first disciples and the day of their Lord's passion would be known for all time not as Bad but as Good Friday. For that little flock the blinding light of the resurrection caused all things to become clear—or, at least, so much clearer. His life, His death, all the details of those few years at last cohered. The resurrection lit up the whole story of the Lord's life and death, and above all it gave an ever-increasing understanding of the eternal purposes of God who through His only begotten Son had opened to men the way of salvation.

"If Christ"—you can understand the confidence with which St. Paul stood up and spoke—"if Christ be not raised your faith is vain." That is the earliest voice with which we find Christianity speaking. It is also the last word, I think, for to-day.

It is not speculative and attractive preaching that is needed to recall men to religion, but the affirmation of a certain fact—a fact as well tried, as pertinent, and as old as the resurrection of the Lord. The first Christian sermon ever preached was without doubt the most powerful, though not the most rhetorical or the most polished. The first Christian sermons were those recorded in the Epistles of St. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles. They are not speculation but narration.

All compelling preaching must be of that sort. It must be a narration of actual experience, something men dare to say they have seen and heard and know. It must tell, that preaching, of what has happened and what God has accomplished without the aid of men. He has broken into the scene of our bewilderment—and, God knows, it is a bewilderment still for us in spite of our new hope—He has broken into the scene of our bewilderment and distraction, and in love and compassion has made to men an effective offer of salvation. Then we have

got to add, if we are to preach with power, the simple little humble experience of how one poor soul — ourselves, this poor soul in the pulpit — did try that way very humbly and found it was no will o' the wisp.

That is always the message of the gospel, my friends, good news proclaimed, and good advice given, narrated by those who in their experience and through their lesser Calvaries have found that the good news is true. Therefore they cry, "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by Thy holy passion Thou hast redeemed the world."

That was how they preached in olden days. Surely the Word of God to-day will not be preached with power unless we make it plain that the Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Eternal God, has declared Himself at last in sufficiency for us all, that God has revealed to us in Christ the outline of His invisible form, that He is compassionate indeed, but above all else — and do not let us go jauntily into the presence of our Creator: there is far too much of that sort of thing, dropping almost casually into speech with the Lord, as if He were a friend and nothing more — that He is compassionate indeed, but that above all else He is Alpha and Omega, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty — almighty because all-loving. Nor shall the gates of hell prevail against the fellowship of those simple people who here and now consent to be cleansed by the fire of God's love that they themselves may comfort them which are in trouble by the comfort wherewith they have been comforted of God. It is of God from start to finish, and to the man who has heard God's call to him his chief source of strength lies always in the recollection that the divine majesty is not dependent on his strength or on his wisdom nor thwarted by his mistakes and his follies. God the Most Merciful asks us to co-operate in the fellowship of His work, but, thanks be, our failures will not permanently upset the plan of God.

If there be one matter about which the original Christian documents give clear and convincing evidence it is to the absolute insufficiency of our Lord's earthly life to give the momentum which originates a new religion. If there be one thing in those documents which carries conviction to all who read with open mind, it is the confidence of those one-time so timid and fearful disciples — one of them was frightened just by the laughter of a servant maid — that in the light of their Lord's resurrection there was no earthly power they could not successfully confront and no heavenly salvation to which they could not aspire.

That is the resurrection fact with which we in these days must recall ourselves to religion. In that recall everything less than that will be of no service to this hard pressed generation which has tried for so long to believe in man, but now finds it mighty hard to believe either in man or in God.

My friends, I am not prepared to allow that these days are more difficult than any other, save for professing Christians. They are

specially difficult for us, for the world does not think we "cut much ice," nor do we. We must not be now as those who look only to the future for deliverance and expect only in the future the golden age. This day—this day—is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

What Christian can doubt (unless his mind is so occupied with the frills of his religion that he has no room or time for the fact) that what is really happening now is this, that the ideal of Christianity is seen no longer as a mere ideal but as the only practical politics? Nothing so astonishes me in my work with people who are not Christians—and many of them are much finer than I can ever hope to be, even with the help of my Master—nothing so startles and surprises me as the disillusionment of the intellectual, so much greater than the disillusionment of ordinary people. They know that all the dreams they once had of a time when science and every form of modern knowledge would assist them to make the world just as perfect as man could wish it to be have crashed. God in this time is vindicating Himself in that same world which crucified Him and buried the incarnation of God's truth (but only for three days). What is being proved now is this, in the words of William Blake, that man is love as God is love, and that politics based on any other philosophy simply refuses to work.

It is not peace at any price that we ask for and that we see in our Lord. It is love at all costs that wins. That only can save the world to-day. Not just a belief in the amiability of God. *Le bon Dieu* is a very soft sort of person. Is it that God loves us all so much that it does not much matter what we all do? No; nor will the world be saved just by a belief in the lovely compassion of Jesus Christ, though His compassion is to me the dearest treasure I possess. Believe in the self-sacrificing love of God, seen at Calvary, exalted at Easter, and justified a million times over for those who will dare to put themselves in the way of Christian experience. It is that belief which will save the world.

It is impossible to have a more complete vindication of the central truth of Christianity than the actual conditions in which Europe finds itself at this very moment. This day is the scripture fulfilled in our ears. The words of Christ were not the dreamy words of someone absent from the highways and byways of ordinary life. They were not merely, as I believe, the words of God. They are the last words in concrete contemporary wisdom and common-sense for this day and for this generation. "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," and, turning to those who dare to believe it, He says, even though they are sinners still, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Even you—receive ye the Holy Ghost. We can, if we will, be His witnesses for the remission of sins. Why is it that we Christian people to-day who accept without question the Christian faith, why is it we have no sort of sense of mission? It is alive enough in the pseudo-religions that are presented to the people to-day. Fascism and Com-

munism, their disciples are eager and anxious to get away. They are disciplined up to the last button. They know what they mean. Then we turn to the only hope of the world, the Church Catholic. People do not believe we mean business. And do we? Do we really mean to confront the world with the figure of Christ, or do we mean to get just as much comfort as we can out of our religion—we need comfort in our religion, but are we intent on just comfort only so that we may sit quietly in our pews and say what a pity it is that all these other people are so irreligious?

This is the decisive hour for the Christian faith. If only our steel could be sharpened for its task! Our task is indeed difficult. But we cannot recall others to religion unless God has recalled and renewed us. Our task is difficult because we cannot put a C.3 Christian up against an A.1 pagan. We cannot do much to-day unless we are trying to make ourselves A.1, and God Himself cannot assist us to serve Him better unless we are prepared—or let me talk of myself, unless I am prepared—to discipline myself in the school of Christ, which is the school of Calvary, though also the school of resurrection joy.

Our task is difficult, but it is not impossible. For the Christian, what is difficult can be done to-day, what is impossible is only that which takes a little longer.

If our Christianity is to be more than the fleeting hope of a disillusioned generation it must have supernatural aid, and since we are sinners ourselves we shall not have any exaggerated hope of our own personal success. We shall have high absolute ideals, and only moderate expectations. But we can claim, whenever we have the courage to do so, the power of God; and the power of God is not given to us just to show well in front of other people. It is given to us first to cleanse ourselves from sin, that we may seek forgiveness. More and more as I get older I realize that you cannot remit anyone's sin unless your own sins have been remitted to you by your Saviour. The only instrument that really counts to-day is a personality really cleansed of sin. All that is required—and this is a lovely thing—of a simple Christian is just to retire as it were into his own room and to claim the gift of cleansing and of power which Christ is willing to give. Then in serene confidence in the over-ruling majesty of God, whose nature is holy love, can he go out prepared to face the forces of darkness that certainly obscure the face of the world, and in His name call upon them to retreat.

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WILLIAM TEMPLE

1881-1944

WILLIAM TEMPLE,
photograph,
courtesy of Radio
Times Hulton
Picture Library.



WILLIAM TEMPLE

- 1881 *Born October 15 in the palace of the bishop of Exeter*
- 1894 *Entered Rugby School for boys*
- 1904 *Became fellow and lecturer, Queen's College, Oxford*
- 1908 *Became a deacon; elected president of the Workers' Educational Association*
- 1909 *Ordained a priest in Church of England*
- 1910 *Accepted position as headmaster of Repton School and became chaplain to the archbishop of Canterbury*
- 1914 *Became rector of St. James, Piccadilly, London*
- 1919 *Became canon of Westminster*
- 1921 *Became bishop of Manchester*
- 1929 *Became archbishop of York*
- 1942 *Became archbishop of Canterbury*
- 1944 *Died October 26*

IN A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH of William Temple, Joseph Fletcher describes him as "the most renowned Primate in the Church of England since the English Revolution. It was the life span of sixty-three years for a man whose role in the Church was unique and influential beyond any equal."¹

LIFE AND TIMES

William Temple was born October 15, 1881, in the bishop's palace in Exeter, England. His father was to become bishop of London and ultimately archbishop of Canterbury, the highest position in the Church of England besides that occupied by the

1. Joseph F. Fletcher, *William Temple: Twentieth-Century Christian* (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 234.

British monarch. Temple grew up in Fulham Palace in London and went to Rugby School. As a boy, he failed to excel in athletics; yet he was so good-natured that boys liked him and gathered around him as friends. When Temple finished at Rugby, the headmaster wrote his father, "I think *anything* is possible to him."²

From Rugby, Temple went to Oxford where he continued his studies and proved his ability as a scholar. In 1904 he was elected a fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, and lecturer in philosophy. He displayed an increasing interest in social issues.

Temple was made a deacon in 1908 and ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1909. Officials in the church hesitated to ordain him because of doctrinal difficulties; Temple discovered early that creeds can be binding.

In 1910 he took a post as headmaster of Repton School and became chaplain to the archbishop of Canterbury. His preaching ability soon gained wide recognition. In 1914 he became rector of St. James, Piccadilly, London, where he moved in ever-widening circles of influence. Preaching, social work, and ecclesiastical involvements consumed his time.

While serving as rector of St. James, Temple met Frances Anson. He served as chairman of the Westminster branch of the Christian Social Union where she was secretary. Her social concern, talent, friendliness, and attractiveness caught his attention. They were married in June, 1916. No children were ever born to them.

Temple's social concern steadily increased. He demonstrated at every opportunity that he believed the Church of England must awaken to the needs of the poor and the downtrodden. He also displayed apologetic ability as he defended the faith of the Church of England with brilliance and persuasiveness.

His climb up the ecclesiastical ladder continued rapidly. He became bishop of Manchester in 1921; prior to this office he had served two years as canon of Westminster. In 1929 he became archbishop of York. Only one step yet remained, the archbishopric of Canterbury—the post once occupied by his father. In 1942 he was elevated to this position, but he served as archbishop of Canterbury for only two brief years, dying on October 26, 1944.

2. Ibid., p. 245.

Temple was noted for many talents: he was an outstanding preacher, a writer of merit, a world-renowned philosopher, an administrative leader, a vivacious and compassionate man. However, three traits in particular stand out from his varied life.

First, he was an excellent communicator of Christian concepts. Horton Davies has written, "He was superbly equipped to be a defender and vindicator of the Christian faith."³ As a philosophical theologian, he declared the truth of Christianity from pulpit and platform.

Second, he displayed great interest in the ecumenical movement. At the 1910 meeting at Edinburgh he dedicated himself to Christian unity. He helped organize the World Council of Churches. He endeavored to open the Church of England to new ideas, concepts, and relationships. Largely through his influence, the British Council of Churches was formed in 1942. Again and again he participated in significant ecumenical meetings.

Third, he was a Christian social reformer. His efforts were dedicated to providing better education for the masses, economic improvement for workmen, better labor relations for all, and improved care for children. He clearly set forth the theme of his social emphasis in *Christianity and the Social Order*, a popular book published first in paperback in 1942. In that book he wrote:

The claim of the Christian Church to make its voice heard in matters of politics and economics is very widely resented, even by those who are Christian in personal belief and in devotional practice. It is commonly assumed that Religion is one department of life, like Art or Science, and that it is playing the part of a busybody when it lays down principles for the guidance of other departments, whether Art and Science or Business and Politics.⁴

Temple soundly refuted this compartmentalized concept by

3. Horton Davies, *Varieties of English Preaching, 1900-1960* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 237.

4. William Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order* (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 9.

his life and by his writings. Toward the end of *Christianity and the Social Order* he states:

There is no hope of establishing a more Christian social order except through the labor and sacrifice of those in whom the Spirit of Christ is active, and that the first necessity for progress is more and better Christians taking full responsibility as citizens for the political, social and economic system under which they and their fellows live.⁵

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Few bishops or archbishops have been remembered as great preachers. Queen Victoria noticed that fact and wrote a solemn warning to Dr. Randall Davidson, her favorite preacher, advising him not to allow the duties of his official office to interfere with his preaching. William Temple may never have read that piece of queenly advice, but he followed it in his career. Attention has centered on his work as a cleric, as a philosopher, and as a theologian. But he was also a distinguished preacher. Ernest Jeffs argued that Temple should be remembered as a "Prince of the Pulpit" as well as a "Prince of the Church": "He is probably the ablest preacher that has ever filled either of the provincial thrones."⁶

Archbishop Temple was not an orator; there was little color in his preaching, few descriptive passages, and almost no drama. He never emphasized emotion or pathos in his appeal. Nevertheless, he was never cold or impersonal in his sermons. If his preaching lacked emotional fervor, it certainly did not lack *intellectual* fervor; that is, his *thinking* was appealing, direct, and forceful. His challenge was primarily to the mind rather than to the heart, but he addressed the mind in such a direct and human way that the heart itself was stirred.

Temple was a square, blunt man; his massive figure became the subject of many colorful descriptions: "The square head very upright, the broad shoulders well back, the whole stocky figure like a rock confronts us with something of the challenge

5. Ibid., p. 100.

6. Ernest H. Jeffs, *Princes of the Modern Pulpit in England* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, n.d.), p. 219.

of the Sphinx.”⁷ Cartoonists loved to caricature him. His spectacles gave him a slightly old-fashioned look – but William Temple was everything except old-fashioned. He had an excellent sense of humor – though he rarely displayed it in the pulpit – and his friends said that he maintained a boyish nature to the end of his life. He spoke in a forthright, outspoken manner that appealed to ordinary people, even though his ideas were those of a philosopher; his concepts were profound but his language was simple. His unassuming manner made him easy to listen to, and many a group of bankers, businessmen, or laboring men – whether churchgoers or not – were able to enjoy a sermon by Archbishop Temple, sometimes unaware that the plainspoken sermon was revealing deeply philosophical ideas.

Temple seldom spoke on strictly personal issues; no doubt his official position influenced his choice of subject matter. He addressed himself to wider issues, to larger concerns; but he believed in applying these truths to the personal level of experience.

For example, Temple believed that evangelism could only take place in the twentieth century against a backdrop of social concern; he felt that social action was “pre-evangelism.” Because of the nature of the modern world, Temple believed that the Christian had to learn to demonstrate his love in the social world, in that complex world in which modern man really lived. If modern man had lost his interest in individual salvation, it was because he saw no transformation of the society about him through Christian effort. The first-century world was preoccupied with the question of individual salvation and life after death; the early church manifested Christian love by dealing with men on the level of that concern. Modern man, according to Temple, is now preoccupied with the chaos of society; modern Christianity must therefore demonstrate the genuineness of its love for man by dealing with the threatening problems of society.

Temple believed that if the church showed its power and effective love in the social areas of life, modern man would seek to learn the secret of this transforming power; then the church would have the opportunity to lead him into individual regeneration in Christ. But Temple did not believe that either

7. Alexander Gammie, *Preachers I Have Heard* (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), p. 189.

preachers or ecclesiastical organization could accomplish this task of evangelism: it must be accomplished by laymen. In his preaching Temple laid great stress upon the importance of evangelism and called it the distinctive challenge of the church for this age.

His approach to evangelism is typical of Temple's general approach to preaching. He did not ignore the role of the individual, but he was not a pastoral preacher. He did not attempt to solve problems on a strictly individual basis. Naturally preaching of this sort did not lend itself to illustration; Temple rarely referred to individual experiences at all. The few illustrations he used were historical, but he showed real genius in his use of those. He rarely painted word pictures, yet he was a master of language. His sermons were excellent examples of beautiful *ideas*, rather than colorful pictures or lovely sentiments. He was as passionately devoted to the concepts of the Christian faith and their usefulness for human life as other preachers have been to the mystical experiences of the faith.

We might expect this kind of truly intellectual preaching to require the preparation of a complete and weighty manuscript, laboriously worked and tediously delivered. Nothing could less describe Archbishop Temple's preaching. He did not use a manuscript; if he carried anything at all into the pulpit with him, it would only be a small half sheet of notepaper with a few headings on it. He was as much at home in the pulpit as on the platform, and he felt no sense of restraint in preaching. "People ask me," he once said, "whether I am not wearing myself out with all of this speaking. The truth is that what wears one out is not what one does but what one doesn't do."⁸ He found it no more difficult to speak five times a day than once a day, and he was known to decide on his subject with only five minutes' notice.

After preaching an excellent sermon in Edinburgh he asked a friend if his sermon had been up to standard. The friend was puzzled by his self-concern, and Temple explained that he had changed his sermon topic as he entered the pulpit because he noticed a recently retired bishop in the audience who had already heard the sermon that he had planned to deliver.

8. Frederic A. Iremonger, *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury: His Life and Letters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 483.

Temple then asked his astonished friend "whether the last minute change had done any harm."⁹

On another occasion he was to speak at Woolwich Arsenal and had forgotten his subject. A minute before the meeting began he asked the chief superintendent what the title of his address was. Naturally the man expected to hear a few unprepared generalities, but he was astonished to hear Temple speak without a single note for forty minutes, hold his audience throughout, and altogether present one of the finest addresses he had ever heard.¹⁰ Obviously Temple was a great student and diligently prepared his sermons, but his prodigious memory and facility with words gave him an unexpected extemporaneous genius.

His voice was good but not particularly impressive. He rarely used gestures and usually stood motionless, except for an occasional inclination of his head or raising of his hand to adjust his glasses. Frequently he rested one hand lightly upon the pulpit, the other clutching his lapel. The entire impression of his delivery was one of ease and simplicity, together with a certain straightforwardness and earnestness. His biographer said of his approach: "To this it should be added that he possessed to an unusual degree those qualities by which an audience is moved and held—obvious authority, intense conviction, and a mastery of words which placed him among the most lucid teachers in Christendom."¹¹

Perhaps Temple was at his best in his chatty radio talks. An excellent example of these messages, "The Armour of God," is included to show his popular style. These radio sermons are more personal—again because of the nature of his audience—than most of his formal addresses. They are characterized by more illustrations, greater warmth, and an easy informality—although the transcriptions of all of Temple's addresses show informality. Those who heard him extensively say that Temple was never better than when he was speaking to a radio audience and describing profound Christian truths in his warmly human style. Even on the printed page, these qualities of an unusual Christian leader can be appreciated.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., p. 485.

Sermons

THE ARMOUR OF GOD

“Put on the whole armour of God” (Ephesians 6:11).

WE need that armour. For this war is not one more of the many national dog-fights of which history is full. It is a struggle between two different conceptions of life. In other words, it is a spiritual war in which, because it started with an act of aggression, earthly weapons have to be used. But earthly weapons cannot win the spiritual war. If our weapons are earthly only, then, even when the enemy is beaten, the real war will not be won. We need those earthly weapons; they are indispensable; but we need also and even more urgently the spiritual weapons, the armour of God.

When St. Paul used this challenging phrase, he had been speaking of the spiritual warfare which all Christians are called upon to wage. “Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” He felt himself surrounded with a whole atmosphere of evil which threatened to stifle the soul. He saw a world where evil has vast power. It was not human beings against whom he struggled but great vicious systems, before which, or in the grip of which, human efforts are futile. So he turns to the armour of God. He remembers some pictures, drawn by the old prophets, of God Himself waging war upon His enemies; and he calls on us to put on the armour of God—not only the armour which God will give us but the armour which God Himself wears; for He is our fellow soldier.

It cannot be necessary after three years of war against Nazi Germany to insist on the fact that this is a struggle between different conceptions of life. Yet even now, when the outrages committed in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia, and the ruthless oppression of Norway, Holland, Belgium, Greece and two-thirds of France have

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provoked the horrified indignation of all civilised men—even now we find people who suppose that the Germans who order these things and who carry out those orders are ordinary wicked men doing what they know is wrong. That is not so. They believe it is right for them to do these things. They are possessed by a conception of life according to which it is right for them to do these things.

Here we see a vivid illustration of that principle which our countrymen find it so difficult to accept—that a false belief is worse than any wrong action, because it leads to innumerable wrong actions. How often we hear the old silly saying that it does not matter what a man believes, and that this is a private affair between a man and his Maker. Are you going to say that of the Nazi belief?—of the belief that God is most perfectly revealed in His Germans, and that any means by which they can establish their supremacy over others are right because that supremacy is the purpose of God? Is that a private affair between each German citizen and his Maker? The Bible was perfectly right when it represented idolatry as the worst of sins. To worship a false god is the worst thing a man can do—far worse than deliberate atheism, worse even than careless neglect of the true God when we know something about Him.

But we shall not kill this idolatry by beating the armies of the enemy. It may spring up again among men, or in some other nation, or among ourselves. We have not been altogether free from it in some earlier periods of our history.

So the first part of the armour of God is the shield of faith—actual living trust in the true God, whose nature and character are what we see in Jesus Christ. Now—are we trusting Him? The King calls us to-day to prayer and dedication; and if we obey his call and there is reality in our prayers and our dedication, these will not be for one day only. Trust in God expresses itself in prayer. If a man hardly ever turns to God for His help, that man is not trusting God very much. Trust and prayer go together. The prayers need not be long. Our Lord warned us against supposing that we should be heard for our “much speaking.” But, however brief, the prayers of a man who trusts God are regular and frequent. So the test of the reality of the prayers you offer to-day will be found in the question whether you also pray to-morrow, and the next day, and the day after that. Everyone can do it. We can all turn our minds to God as we get up, and as we go to bed, and at many times during the day. I suggest as a brief prayer for our country, which is also an act of dedication, the words “O God make us worthy of victory.” Multitudes now are using the strokes of Big Ben as they sound through our loudspeakers at nine o’clock in the evening for a remembrance of God and of our dependence upon Him. Are you doing that? If not, try to begin to-morrow, and then keep it up.

Of course we have, as a people, been letting ourselves drift away from God. People do not know the Bible as their fathers, and still more

their grandfathers, did. And if you know nothing about God, of course you cannot trust Him. So as well as the shield of faith we must take up "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." And we shall find it full of one demand upon us—to repent, that is to give up our own self-centred way of looking at life and learn to look at it in God's way instead. And we need this urgently. Not only have we let ourselves drift into forgetfulness of God, but with that we have let some of our moral standards slip badly. I have been told by Judges of the High Court that they are forced to think that there is less care for honesty, less shame at dishonesty, than there was. The Christian standards of conduct with regard to sex are very widely ignored. Until the call of the war came, there was among us less sense than in our best periods, that duty comes absolutely first and pleasure or comfort nowhere in comparison.

To win the war is not enough. We long to make, this time, a true peace and a better world. We long to see the nations dwelling side by side as members of one great family, enriching one another by their varieties of material resources, of tradition and of culture. We long to see all citizens within each nation united in the fellowship of real brotherhood. We have an experience of that brotherhood in the war in our unity of purpose and in the fellowship of suffering, a fellowship lately brought home to us when the Duke of Kent died on active service, uniting the Royal Family with the simplest and humblest in the common sacrifice. But this real brotherhood of man can only be actual and lasting for those who know God as the one Father of all men, in serving whom they serve each other because His love embraces all.

We hope to see our armies marching across Europe, setting free the nations as they advance. Let us be sure that they take with them, and that we have in abundance to send with them, the only promise of true peace—a living faith in God our Father and theirs. Let us be sure that our countrymen who follow in the occupations of trade and commerce go in the spirit of co-operation rather than of rivalry. But for all this journeying towards a friendlier and happier world we must have our "feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

So then "put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." Clothed with the armour of God, we can call all men to dedicate themselves to His service as we dedicate ourselves this day.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

"Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever" (Matthew 6:13).

SO WE AFFIRM when we recite the prayer that Our Lord taught us. And unless we believe in fact that God reigns over the world that He has made, our faith must be very meagre. That God is the "Determiner of Destiny" is the least that can be ascribed to Him by any who suppose that there exists any Being who may fitly be called God. Somehow or other it must be true that "The Kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Governor among the people."

Yet while we affirm "Thine is the Kingdom," we also pray "Thy Kingdom come." For though by unchanging right throughout the ages all authority belongs to God, yet it is only too manifest that the world we know is not effectively subject to that authority. His sovereignty is not acknowledged; His law is not obeyed; His purpose is not fulfilled. If our prayer should be fully answered; if God's Name were hallowed, and His Kingdom come, and His Will done, in earth as it is in heaven—we know that all which embitters life would be gone from it, and all its perplexities would be resolved. For God is the Father of all men, and His loving purpose embraces the welfare of all alike.

Is the Divine Kingdom, then, something which will be actual in the future but has no actuality now? Assuredly not. In the course of individual lives and in the history of nations, God asserts His sovereignty by the judgments which follow neglect of His law. "Morning by morning He bringeth His judgment to light; He faileth not." When Our Lord looked upon the city that could not recognize or welcome Him, He read in that failure the omen of its destruction. The same nationalist pride that led Jerusalem to refuse its spiritual destiny would bring upon it the wrath of imperial Rome; and in its fall He taught His disciples to see the end of that age and the coming of the Son of Man with power. So it is when any civilization falls through repudiation of some one or another of the principles of Christ, whether that repudiation be shown in the maintenance of slavery, or in the denial of personal freedom, or in the clinging to such privilege and inequality as break up the fellowship of society. In every such catastrophe we see the Son of Man come with power. If Europe should prove itself unable to subordinate the selfishness of nations to the well-being of the civilized world, so that its rich inheritance is overwhelmed in the calamity of another general war—from which may God in His mercy preserve us!—there too we should see the Son of Man coming in power. Through

the terrible anguish of such a time the judgment of God calls for a change of heart and action. If the new beginning is made on the old principles, it can only lead to a similar judgment. But if men will learn from the consequence of their self-will, they always can begin again in closer conformity to the purpose and the law of God.

We do not have to search by arduous reasoning to know what that law and purpose are. God has given to us the perfect expression of His character in Jesus Christ. It is to His mind that we must conform our plans and our policies if we are in our national life to ascribe to God the kingdom, the power, and the glory; it is for rejection of Him that judgment falls on us so far as we act on principles alien from His.

To-day [May 24, 1937], at the beginning of a new reign, we are assembled here to give thanks to God for His guidance of our nation and empire hitherto, to acknowledge that the kingdom, the power and the glory in all the world is His alone, to dedicate our use of all His gifts to His service, and to pray that He will by His Holy Spirit keep us constant in obedience to Himself. If we believe at all in the Divine Providence we cannot doubt that so great and distinctive a fact as the British Empire has its place in the providential scheme; its very existence constitutes our vocation. That is the relation of the Divine Kingdom to the kingship lately hallowed in the Abbey Church of Westminster, and to the Commonwealth of Nations represented here to-day. If we are both patriots and Christians we shall take pride in every aspect of the Empire which qualifies it for service to God's Kingdom; but we shall not hesitate to recognize that, being a human structure composed of human beings, there have been episodes in history and features of its policy demanding the repentance which is man's anticipation of God's judgment. Few things are of greater consequence than the grounds on which we take pride in this Empire or teach the children who are its future citizens to take pride in it. If the ground of our pride is that it represents an imposition of our culture and policy upon other peoples whether they will or no, then we shall make it an instrument of our self-assertiveness calling forth the resistance of others till it perishes in the conflict it has provoked. But the ground of our pride in the Empire can be far different from this; it can be, and surely is, the freedom of fellowship which unites the self-governing Dominions in freely offered loyalty to the Throne, the tradition and ideal of equality before the Law for the many races composing it, the maintenance of even justice throughout its borders, and the ready co-operation with others in the common tasks of civilization; if these be the ground of our pride we shall be vigilant to notice and to check whatever mars the perfection of our adherence to those principles, and shall devote our energy to keeping our great inheritance ever more true to its own distinctive character. It is not our power or will to dominate others that can be dedicated to the glory of God as we

know Him in Jesus Christ; but we can so dedicate the good gifts of ordered liberty and freely established order, of equality before the Law, and of common loyalty to the Throne which is the focus of our fellowship.

The Kingdom of God is the Sovereignty of Love—since God is Love. That great proclamation brings comfort and courage to all whose hearts are attuned to it; for if God is Love, then Love is the ultimate power of the universe, and every purpose or policy prompted by Love—by the desire to serve rather than to gain—will reach its fulfilment, whatever the sacrifices that may first be required of it, because it is allied with the supreme power. But the proclamation that God is Love is not only a source of consolation; it is also a principle of judgment; for every purpose or policy that is alien from love and is based on selfishness or acquisitiveness is bound to end in disaster, because it is resisting the supreme power.

The Kingdom of God is the Sovereignty of Love, and the subordination of power to Love is the principle of that Kingdom. Once, and only once, Our Lord applied to Himself the title of King; that was when He identified Himself with the outcasts and the failures of society. "Then shall the King say unto them . . . I was an-hungered and ye gave me meat . . . I was in prison and ye came unto me."

Such a sympathy, including all in its embrace, has been the tradition of our English throne for a hundred years. Long may it so remain—a truly Christian tradition of kingship, which we know that the new reign will maintain and strengthen. Long may we all in that same spirit seek to use our imperial power to supply the needy, to uplift the down-trodden, to serve all men as their condition may require and our resources may permit.

Can we not look forward in imagination to an empire and a world guided by such principles? We seem to see a vast multitude drawn from all races and from every social class pledged to one thing and to one thing only, the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty by obedience to His purpose in every department of life. As they labour there takes shape a world, much like our own and yet how different! Still city and country life with all their manifold pursuits and interests, but no leading into captivity and no complaining in our streets; still richer and poorer, but no thoughtless luxury, no grinding destitution; still sorrow, but no bitterness; still failure, but no oppression; still priest and people, yet both alike unitedly presenting before the eternal Father the one true sacrifice of dedicated life—the Body broken and the Blood outpoured; still Church and World, yet both together celebrating unintermittently that divine service which is the service of mankind.

Such a vision may be prophecy if we will have it so; the condition to be fulfilled by us, who now thank God for our King and Queen and

for their coronation, and seek to dedicate this Empire to His service, is that in heart and policy and act we fully acknowledge the Sovereignty of God. "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

GOD'S CALL TO THE CHURCH

"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may shew forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God" (1 Peter 2:9-10, ERV).

"AN ELECT RACE": they were a scattered crowd from several different races. "A royal priesthood": they were a despised, hunted, helpless crowd, whose glory was to take buffeting patiently. "A holy nation": they were the dregs of all countries, with no resemblance to nationality. When those great phrases were first spoken to the tribes who had lately escaped from their bondage in Egypt, they must have seemed an outrageous paradox; that they should now be applied to "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" must have seemed a sheer absurdity. What could justify it?

Only that which caused it, namely, a faith in what God had done so vivid and firm that it was proof against all prudential calculations and all the sneers of worldly wisdom. It was not in themselves that members of the early Church found the marks that proclaimed them a royal priesthood; it was in the act of God by which He had called them to the knowledge of His love. All mankind was created to be a people for God's own possession; but those to whom the word of truth is come are especially called to "be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." In the Church should be found, on the scale set by the Church's extent at any time, the realisation of that purpose of God which is at last to be

fulfilled in all men. Men ought to be able by looking at the Church to see in it what God can do, not only for individuals, but for a society that trusts in Him.

At a time when all the Bishops of our Communion are gathered from all parts of the world to take counsel together for the work of the Church, it is good for us to go back to the question, What is the Church for? We desire to pray at this time that its leaders may be rightly guided; and we shall pray much more intelligently if we keep fresh in mind the task for which the guidance is needed. If we are to consider this question with any profit we must go to the roots.

First let us remind ourselves what the Church is not. It is not a devotional club; it is not an association of such people as have the religious temperament coming together for the purpose of providing themselves with various types of worship according to taste. Again, it is not a philosophical coterie, existing to maintain certain intellectual propositions against other speculators who prefer other theories. Once more, it is not the creation of a priestly caste which is concerned to provide itself with a sphere of activity, as our rationalist friends courteously suggest. Yet it sometimes behaves in such a way as to give colour to all these accounts of it. More particularly, in recent periods we have treated the Church as an institution for the supply of certain needs of our own, with little regard to the purpose for which the supply is given and scarcely a thought of carrying out such a purpose. When we have got beyond the notion that the Church exists solely for the benefit of its several members, we tend to make it an end in itself, isolated from all the great concerns of human life and therefore liable to be condemned by those without as futile and irrelevant.

To ask what the Church really is, is to ask what it is in the purpose of God. God is Love; that is His inmost nature as revealed to us. He created men both for the manifestation and for the satisfaction of His Love. Love always must communicate itself; that is why self-expression is an essential characteristic of God, as St. John reminds us when he says that in the beginning, or in the fundamental principle of things, was the Word which exists in relation to God and indeed is God. God cannot just be Himself alone; He must share His best; He must express Himself to others. But God is not limited in expression as we are. He can create, bringing into existence out of nothing what will represent His purpose. So His declaration of His Nature did not take the form of a statement in words; He created beings in His own image, spiritual as He is spiritual, to be the living embodiment of His purpose. He would love them; He would be loved by them; in their love for Him, and in Him for one another, should be seen the beauty of the love which is His own Nature.

But because men were spiritual and capable of love, they were also capable of selfishness. So self-will, which is sin, spoilt the divine plan. And God the Creator, to fulfil His purpose in creation, must needs

reveal His nature of love in that act which always springs from love when love is confronted with selfishness, the act of self-sacrifice. The Divine Word, the self-revelation of God, took the form of a human life: Jesus Christ was born. Some shared that human life closely enough to begin to understand. They gradually learnt what selfish man would never have guessed, that loving service to the point of utter self-giving is not only the occasional duty of man but is the eternal glory of God. It was hard for them to learn it. When St. Peter was first swept into the confession that His Master was the Messiah, the agent and representative of God, he was dismayed by the teaching which the Lord at once began to give. "The Son of Man must suffer many things . . . and be killed." "Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him." But when they understood, this became the supreme glory of their God. "We proclaim a Messiah on a Cross, to Jews a scandal and to Gentiles an absurdity, but to the very people who are called, both Jews and Greeks, a Messiah who is God's power and God's wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:23-24).

Humanity as a whole had not realised its vocation. After long preparation through the history of Israel, God came Himself on earth and made Himself known to the few who had eyes to see and ears to hear. They passed on the knowledge to other such, and these became "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures," the first to live, as all are called to live, in the comradeship of the Divine Love, the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost. And in those days it was all true. The barriers of religious training, of culture, of social position, of sex difference, all disappeared. In place of the familiar contending factions there was "one man in Christ Jesus." The scattered congregations were one Body, the Body of the Messiah. The "elect of the Dispersion" in many lands were "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." And they knew perfectly well that they had these splendid dignities not merely to boast of or to enjoy, but that they might "show forth the excellencies of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light."

We need not trace the process by which that splendid inheritance was lost. The Church survived persecution at the hands of the State; it has nearly died, many times over, of State-patronage. It ceased to be an elect race, for it became identical in membership with the races among which it worked. To be a Christian had once meant very genuinely to share the passion of Christ; it came to mean little more than to follow the fashion of the world. The truth of the Gospel remained sublime; but men came to accept it as they accepted the sunrise and the sunset, which also are sublime but make no demand for moral sublimity in their beholders. The Church was no longer a city set on a hill, for it had extended its boundaries till hills and valleys and even sickly swamps were included within them.

There was indeed some value in that long period, for though the world so grievously infected the Church, the Church was still able to

purify the world in a very great degree. But now, thank God, the old conditions are returning. Many streams have flowed into the river of the Church's life; the Evangelical movement, the Catholic movement, the Liberal movement, have all brought an added volume to its waters as they flow towards their fulfilment in the ocean of God's love. The world that knows not Christ and the world that turns away from Him are once more constantly in our minds. Perhaps the corruption of the Church was due to its forgetfulness of its missionary task more than to any one cause; and that forgetfulness was due mainly to the fact that most Christians, after Europe was converted, had never had contact with any heathen peoples. Those days are past: with the development of trade and commerce we are dealing every day with the unconverted world. The Church is once more a minority in a world to be won for Christ, and it faces its task refreshed and re-invigorated by the spiritual movements of a century and a half.

The world is helplessly drifting. It would not perhaps be true to say that never before were so many critical problems awaiting decision. It is certainly true to say that never were so many present to men's minds. When the Roman Empire broke up, Europe was all problems; but no one concerned himself about more than a tiny fraction of them. With modern means of communication and the interaction of nation upon nation the whole weight of the burden presses upon us all. What an opportunity for a truly Catholic Church, Catholic not only by right and title through maintenance of the Apostolic faith, but Catholic in fact and power by the inclusion in one Body of the Christians in every nation! Alas! that Catholic Church does not exist. But the prospect for us is not nearly so dispiriting as that before the elect of the Dispersion in the countries of Asia Minor to whom St. Peter wrote. We — let us try in reverent humility to believe it — we “are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.” That is our vocation; but not ours alone. That royal priesthood we share with Christians of every colour, and every kind of culture; and those, who in earthly things may be our enemies, in that holy nation are our compatriots.

The sins of Christians in the past, as well as in the present, make it possible for us to do in this hour what we see to be demanded by the situation. There is no actual international fellowship of all Christians, so we cannot act as if there were. We have been content to pursue our own salvation; we cannot suddenly become powerful to save the world. God by a miracle of grace might empower the Church; but we have little reason to expect Him to override our sin and folly when that might only help us to ignore the lesson of these times. We pray for His strength in all such abundance as may enable us most truly to show forth His excellencies; but we have to go step by step. At least in our own nation the Christians of every denomination and every social class could come together in conferences both local and national to

seek under the guidance of their common Lord the solution of our economic and industrial problems. And some steps are open to us here and now.

Let us constantly pray for the whole Church of Christ, as the Prayer Book teaches us, remembering that it includes all His true disciples.

Let us test our thoughts on all matters, public or private, by the Mind of Christ, and form our judgments on the events of every day, whether in London or in Ireland, at Spa or at Amritsar, by that standard only.

Let us never say of any person or of any people words that may make others think less kindly of them except when we are plainly responsible for making known some hidden truth.

Then, trying thus to act as members of the Fellowship of the Divine Love, let us expect from our worship and our communion with God, who is Love, an inflow of power to live as members of God's holy nation, the first-fruits of His creatures. If our faith has not inspired our citizenship, it is largely because we have not expected it. God never forces His gifts upon us. We must seek if we would find; we must knock if the door is to be opened. And we must be ready for sacrifice in the life of the Church or of the nation as truly as in our own individual lives.

For the election of God is not to self-complacent comfort but to fellowship with Christ, whom men hated because He bade them love one another; the royalty of Christ is seen not in pomp but in sacrifice; his Holy nation will not be withdrawn into a secluded sanctity, but will live in this world by the powers of the world to come, the powers of God who is Almighty Love. By Cross and Passion, by Agony and Bloody Sweat, God showed to us His excellencies; if we are to show them to the world, it must be through the same sacrifice of self-will. The Love of God is the cause of the Creation; the Love of God is the goal of history; to us who know that Love the call is given that we, dedicating our lives to Him, should show forth His excellencies, till we with all men see Him as He is and seeing Him are made like Him.

OTHER WORLDLINESS

"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3, ERV).

DURING THE LAST HALF-CENTURY a change has been passing over the religious outlook of Christians which is as profound as that of the Reformation itself. Whether it will prove as permanent it is idle to prognosticate. But if we try to realise the religious outlook of Christians in the middle of the nineteenth century, or at dates earlier than that, we are bound to see that their main concern was with their prospect of "salvation" in another world. For us, whose main concern is with the world in which we live, it is easy to fall into unfair censures of our forefathers. By salvation the best of them certainly meant deliverance from sin and all that was alien from the love of God, and not any mere escape from the torments of hell or enjoyment of the delights of heaven. But when all allowance is made, there was, in the view which now seems to us old-fashioned, a real self-centredness which is plainly out of harmony with the religion of Christ. And while no doubt the loftier spirits of the older type knew and insisted that only by conduct in conformity with the Divine nature of Love could fellowship with God be realised, yet there was a tendency among pious people to regard earthly conditions as having hardly any importance. Thus Wilberforce, the hero of the abolition of the slave-trade, explains in his *Practical System of Christianity*, that Christianity makes the inequalities of the social order less galling to the poor, largely by insisting on the shortness of the time during which such inconveniences have to be endured in comparison with the eternity of happiness to which the Christian looks forward. So again Paley, the disastrously predominant theologian of the early nineteenth century, was prepared to instruct the almost destitute poor that their effort to make both ends meet was an agreeable and even exciting occupation which was denied to the unfortunate rich. All of this seems very remote; but I remember attending a missionary meeting at which a speaker tried to stir our emotions by telling us how many people die daily in India "without Christ," and I recollect that a friend expressed my own thoughts afterwards by saying, "I do not much mind their dying without Him; what I can't stand is their having to live without Him." And it is not so very long ago, as I have been told, since a speaker declared

in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, amid much approbation, that "It is no part of a Christian's duty to make the world a better place; this world is a mere stage through which we pass on our way to glory." That probably strikes us as an almost ideal expression of the view which we desire with all the passion of our souls to repudiate.

Over against that older view is the conviction that we are called as Christians to the service of God here and now; that on earth as in heaven His Name is to be hallowed, His Kingdom to come, and His Will to be done. For that Christ has taught us to pray; for that He has summoned us to work. Not there but here is the sphere of our spiritual concern; not then but now is salvation to be won and made manifest. The Christian's duty in regard to slums is not merely to tell the inhabitants that their squalor is of small consequence because soon they will pass to the house of many mansions, but to abolish the slums. The Christian's duty in regard to sweated-labour is not merely to comfort the oppressed with the reminder that earthly conditions are transient, but to destroy the system which makes sweating possible. The Christian's duty in regard to war is not merely to risk his life for his country in sure anticipation of a life beyond the grave, but to help to deliver nations from the spirit that produces wars. The former duty in each case is a real one; but it does not exhaust our obligation, and if either of the two is emphasised alone the whole balance and proportion of life is destroyed.

A remarkable sign of the strength of the new conviction is afforded by the fact that the occurrences of the war have rather deepened than shaken it. When so many of those whom we love most have passed through death, it would be natural if the attention of religious people had swung back to the other world as the chief object of our concern. But it has not been so. Rather it is felt that our best method of commemorating the friends whom we have lost is to do all that lies in our power to make the England for which they died more worthy of their sacrifice.

It seems impossible to doubt that the modern outlook is nearer in spirit to the New Testament, and especially to the Gospels, than was the old-fashioned view. But that view had one great point of strength, and what seems to us the fuller view has two great sources of weakness. It is worth while to attend to these.

The great merit of the old view is its insistence on the necessity for personal discipline. Anyone who took seriously the duty, or even the prudence, of conducting life with a view to his own personal condition hereafter, was at least committed to a process of winning real self-control. Those who seek first the Kingdom of God must remember that they need just as much discipline of character if they are to be good "soldiers and servants" of Christ as any man could require with a view to his own personal perfection. And as this emphasis on discipline is

the great merit of the older view, so the tendency to indiscipline and even to carelessness about our personal life, both in minor matters of morals and in the cultivation of our devotional faculties – our faculties for prayer and worship and communion with God – is the great danger in the more modern view. The cause to which we dedicate ourselves is so vast and all-embracing that the concern for blemishes in our own character seems almost petty. I am not speaking of concern for great faults or vices; anyone who is trying to serve Christ at all will take them seriously, and indeed there is no way of staving off their attack so effective as the absorption of our minds in some large interest. But there is a real danger of moral slovenliness. And we must be on our guard against it. Moreover, the humdrum duties of every day are liable to seem too small to trouble about when our minds are filled with the vision of the world as it might be; yet they and no other are our duty at the moment. "Little things are little things; but faithfulness in little things is a very great thing."

The other danger besetting the modern outlook is the danger that materialism may invade even religion itself. If in view of the social and economic injustice of the world we turn more to the physical conditions than to the characters of men and women, then, whatever our motive, we are betraying our religion to the enemy. But here again we shall be saved from disaster if we will only attend to the facts that are before our eyes. The Labour unrest of the years before the war, which has also appeared in certain critical disturbances in the course of the war, is not to be appeased by any re-distribution of this world's goods. It has its basis in a spiritual discontent and a conviction that the existing order of things is radically unjust, because in effect it denies the personality of the worker. But that spiritual discontent cannot be satisfied except through a change of heart in the ranks of labour itself only less complete than the change of heart required in most other sections of society.

The two dangers can be summed up as temptations to shallowness. We must not become so concerned with our efforts in our life-time, nor even with the progress of many generations, as to forget the eternal and unchanging truth which gives its meaning to all our little strivings. It is quite plainly impossible that the whole purpose of God for mankind should be carried out under the conditions of life on this planet, and our concern for this life must be an addition to, not a substitute for, our concern for the eternal. To the restless fever of this world and its tumult no man can bring healing unless he habitually lives in the presence of the eternal God with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and has in his own soul some measure of the peace which passeth understanding. We are not to neglect the eternal world but to live here and now as its citizens.

For if we are to be in earnest with the new religious outlook which has been given to our time, it means that we are to live in this world

by the principles and in the power of the other world. We can never re-make the world by the world's methods. So long as men or nations are mainly concerned with their share of this world's goods there will be strife and misery and hatred. We are animals, and from our animal ancestry we inherit a natural preoccupation with the physical side of things. But we are also spirits, made in the image of God, and from our spiritual endowment we receive the capacity for another fashion of life. Progress is the increasing control of the spiritual over the animal in man. In one sense it is "against nature." The Incarnation was "against nature"; the Resurrection was "against nature." Christ came to call men to a fashion of life which is "against nature" – if by nature we mean what has always been. And in that sense of the word we have to choose between "nature" and Christ. But He has achieved what we could not achieve, and in Him we see what we are to become. Our real life is something we have never yet really tested; it is hid with Christ in God.

This does not mean that if we live in fellowship with God we can always do at once what we attempt. History is a long process and God has plenty of time for the fulfilment of His purpose. And so when it is said by ignorant journalists or imprudent bishops that because our cause in the great war is just, therefore if God exists He will give us victory, we must remind ourselves that the cause of Assyria and of Babylon was not just, yet they prevailed against Israel and that Christ was sent to the Cross. But if Christianity means anything at all, it means that those who are faithful to its principles secure the establishment of those principles at last, if not at first, because they are the expression of that Mind and Will which is the ultimate truth of all things.

How shall we apply all of this to ourselves? First in a new devotion to the entirely dull duties of every day. Tasks may be dismal and the routine of life rather dreary; in winning the power to do these things with thoroughness you qualify more than in any other one way for responsibilities; it is he who is "faithful in a few things," or in little things, who is entrusted with the responsibility of "ruling over many things." That first; and in the early stages of our training nothing quite equals it in importance.

Secondly, you must keep alive by prayer and communion your own intercourse with God. Do not be frightened by the times when all your prayers seem cold and dead. Go on fixing your mind on what we know of God as He has shown Himself to us in Christ; and at least once every day say the Lord's Prayer slowly, trying hard to mean some one petition in it with all your soul – and a different one each day. Then come regularly to receive the Body that was broken for the Kingdom of God and the Blood that was shed for the Kingdom of God, determined that your lives shall also become in the power of Christ lives of sacrifice for the Kingdom of God.

And once more learn to realise your membership in the Church. We have been content for the most part to be religious one by one; there has been no united army of Christian people determined to order the world on Christian principles. The Church exists to be such an army, but because we have not appreciated the need for unity of aim and action, it has become a mere organisation for maintaining public worship and ministering to individual souls. The result is that in the great affairs which go to make up the history of mankind the Church, as a society, hardly counts at all. The first necessity for ourselves and for the world is to rouse the Church to a fuller understanding of its own responsibilities. The Kingdom of God is like other kingdoms at least in this, that if its army is not ready when hostile forces gather against it, it suffers loss. The Church is the Army of the Kingdom of God, and it manifestly is not ready.

There are two supreme problems that will have before very long to be solved. One is the international; one is the industrial. Both are in the last resort moral questions. Before the war we did not have to consider ultimate questions very closely. Our system was there, and we had to deal with it piece by piece. But now the whole fabric has come tumbling down and we have to rebuild it from the foundation. Consequently we have definitely to choose our foundation-principles. Are we going to build again upon competing selfishness and mutual distrust? Or are we going to try this time to build on the one truth of all things, the revealed nature of God, the supremacy of Love? Are we, in other words, going at last to recognise that all forms of self-seeking, in man or in nation, are really self-destructive? "He that would save his life, the same shall lose it." Only in service of what lies beyond ourselves, only in service of the Kingdom of God, in which our nation, with others, is a province, is peace or joy to be found.

And so we come back to the starting point. We are to live here as citizens of the Kingdom of God. And we can only do that truly and effectively if our affections are set on things above, that is to say, on love and beauty and truth, whose value is in themselves and cannot be touched by accident or by death; not on things on the earth—greatness or honour or riches or any other thing whose value is determined by a comparison between ourselves and other people. And your first duty and need in your preparation for the battle of the Lord is to learn the fellowship with Christ by which chiefly men are raised to that higher plane.

Think of Him then, the Hero-Redeemer, "Who for the joy that was set before Him," the joy of a world won by Him for His Father's Kingdom, "endured the Cross in scorn of contempt"; hear Him as He pleads with your self-will; obey Him as He calls to sacrifice. In Him, and nowhere else, is the power by which you must serve Him. "Ye died": in comparison with the claim that is made, you found yourselves helpless: "your life hath been hid with Christ in God." There,

if you will but seek and find it, is the power that can once more "turn the world upside down." But you must truly seek it. The water that turns the wheels of the world's machinery has its source in the high and lonely places. Just because you are called, as all of us are called to-day, to so supremely great a task, take heed that nothing in yourself is spoiling your fitness for that high responsibility. Be diligent in the dull daily work; judge your own character by Christ's demand and example and by no lower standard; and kneel daily before the Cross of His triumphant humiliation, that you may hear the voice of the King of Kings, as, crowned with glory and thorns, He calls you to a service in which self must be either offered or forgotten, a service which yet is perfect freedom because it is rendered to Almighty Love.

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORLD

"The earth was waste and void . . . and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2, ERV).

SO THE PHYSICAL WORLD once was; so the moral world now is: a vast formlessness gradually being reduced to form and significance by the constant operation of the Divine influence. It was a brilliant anticipation of modern knowledge that led the author of the first chapter of the Bible to present at the outset a picture of the world in a state where not only shape and structure but, apparently, all solidity was lacking. But there is no more than a pleasant curiosity to be satisfied by a comparison of this pictorial myth with a scientific treatise. It is enough to note that the Bible is at one with science in picturing the course of the physical creation as a process from formlessness and meaningless fluidity towards form and solidity and significance.

We may trace that process historically in the researches of natural science; but to-day we will rather think of this work of God the Holy Ghost in shaping the world from the standpoint of man's two great endeavours to enter into its secret, the endeavours of science and of

art. The first is the way of knowledge. Consider what the history of any real knowledge is. People sometimes say light-heartedly that our duty is to observe the facts and then make theories to fit them. But that is light-headed as well as light-hearted. Only at the end of the scientific process do we know what the facts really are. Our first observations, however carefully they are taken, are, at the very best, rough summary accounts, given according to the evidence of our somewhat crude sensations. Someone makes a theory to account for these; then he and others, with that theory in mind, observe the facts again; with the help of the theory observation is no longer haphazard but deliberate and selective, so that new elements in the facts are observed; these may in turn lead to a modification of the theory. Then the process is repeated. And this goes on until it seems that all the discoverable elements of the subject-matter are known and a theory is formed which links them together in an intelligible coherence. But we have then got something very different from facts and theories as commonly understood. We have probably reached a stage where the facts are atoms or electrons or particles, or whatever else we are to regard as the ultimate constitution of matter, things which no one ever saw, and are believed to exist because the theory has led to that belief. Such facts rest on the theory as well as the theory on the facts; the two are become indistinguishable, for they are united in a system of knowledge where all is fact and all is theory. It is at the end of the scientific process, not at its beginning, that we know the facts. To take the obvious instance, we all believe to-day that the earth goes round the sun; but what we seem to observe is the sun going round the earth.

Then remember what ages of astronomical study were required before that belief, so familiar to us, was reached. In one generation after another men sought the truth, each building on the labour of his forerunners. The truth was not to be found merely by careful looking; it required right thinking. And all the thinking that men can do has only enabled them to penetrate the fringe of that great scheme of perfect truth which is the work of the Supreme Reason, God the Creator Spirit.

We do not sufficiently attend to this stupendous fact. We take for granted the correspondence of our reason with the principles that govern the physical creation. And some think to rob it of its significance by regarding the reason of men as a faculty evolved in the course of centuries for dealing with the facts of our experience and therefore taking a form adapted to such a purpose. But that makes no shadow of difference. The fact is what it is, however it originated. And the fact is that man by the exercise of his reason can probe the secret of Nature, showing that Nature is controlled by principles akin to the mind of man; in other words nature is fundamentally spiritual.

So we may say that, however far the human mind may advance in scientific research, it will always find that God the Holy Ghost has been

there first. He is the archetypal scientist, the Supreme Reason whereby the universe is held together in the perfect unity of intelligible laws.

This impression is deepened when we consider the process by which, under those laws, the creation has come to assume its present form. "All things were in chaos," says Anaxagoras, "until Reason set them in order." "The earth was waste and void," says the author of the first chapter of Genesis; "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." These ancient writers summarise for us the impression left by modern doctrines. Slowly, with endless adaptations and adjustments, the Spirit has led the creation, always subject to its own intelligible laws, which are its spiritual charter, to the phase we witness; and the process still goes forward. Human science is but the partial apprehension of the progressively realised plan of the Omniscient. Science finds its perfect counterpart in the truth, and the student of science finds his own ideal in the Spirit of Truth.

Now the scientific mind which studies the world is itself part of the world which it studies. It is the constant recognition of this fact, with its implications, which more than anything else distinguishes the philosophic attitude of mind from the scientific as generally understood. But if it be so, then the impulse to pursue knowledge must be taken as a manifestation of the same Spirit Who guides the course of the world which in that impulse we are impelled to know. The Spirit within us prompts us to seek Himself by study of the works in which He is manifest. God in the soul reaches out to God in Nature. In man's achievement of knowledge God makes answer to Himself.

But the Creator Spirit is not only the perfect scientist. He is also the perfect artist. The world He fashions does not merely hold together by means of intelligible laws. It is also the supreme miracle of beauty, towards which human art gloriously but never quite successfully aspires. The artist may sometimes claim to improve on Nature; but that can only mean that by selection of interests and narrowing of the field of attention he presents a beauty more apprehensible by us than is the great panorama of the natural creation.

For (don't you mark?) we're made so that we love
First, when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted – better to us
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so
Lending our minds out.

Our capacities are so limited that we cannot enjoy pure comedy and pure tragedy both at once; we should be confused by the attempt. One element or the other must preponderate, and the less important be kept in strict subordination. But who shall say whether tragedy or comedy is the prevailing note of the animal creation, where we find

among birds and beasts the sublimity of heroism in the mother's care and self-sacrifice for her young or the pattern of fidelity in the devotion of a dog, and where we also find the glorious joke of the ass's bray and the duck's quack and the pelican's bill and the penguin's solemn waddle. The art of Nature is plainly beyond emulation. Will any colourist attempt to surpass the splendour of the sunset? Will any dress-maker compete with the plumage of the raven or of the humming-bird? Is any miniature to be compared to the wing of a common blue butterfly? Our most laborious attempts fall short of the lavish prodigality of Nature. Is any drama so dramatic as history itself? Is any even so theatrical?

At this season all the world is clothed in gorgeous raiment. Are any sights on earth more thrilling with loveliness than the carpet of blue-bells in a wood or the flashing sheen of buttercups in an open field? And we know that it is God who "so clothes the grass of the field." That golden glory of buttercups is the artistry of God the Holy Ghost. The wind that sways it into rippling laughter is His breath. At the riotous beauty of God's handiwork the morning stars sing together and all the sons of God shout for joy. For all of it is His work and in all of it He rejoices. "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

As the seasons change and the succeeding glories return, "God renews His ancient rapture."

Two arts the Spirit kept in reserve to bring to their completeness in Man, himself the Spirit's highest accomplishment. The music of Nature, for all its loveliness, is not to be compared with the music of man, whose superiority here is due to his consciousness of his own condition, his power of deliberate choice of expression, and his sense of contrast between his actual and his ideal state. From this same self-consciousness arises the very possibility of literature, the art which man possesses for himself alone. But any contrast between man and Nature is false, for man is part of Nature, and his art is just another impulse of God the Holy Ghost, the Creator-Artist of the world. Here once more God from within the soul reaches out to God in Nature, and as we appreciate His work we enter into the joy of our Lord. If in all the recurring seasons God renews His ancient rapture, then the poet who rejoices in them rejoices with the joy of God. He hails them as brethren because he and they are alike God's handiwork and the beauty in them and in his soul is the self-expression of one and the self-same Holy Spirit.

Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs;
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favour now.

So Shelley, who rejected Christian dogma, pours forth his invocation, the utterance of his divinely-inspired thirst for beauty, to the works of the Divine Spirit who is the Lord and Giver of Beauty.

The Spirit that brings order and beauty out of chaos in the physical world seeks ever to do the same in the moral world. But to create the physical universe was easy to omnipotence; the word produced its own fulfilment. "God said, Let there be light; and there was light." To make of the life of men a thing of ordered beauty was infinitely difficult even for omnipotence. For here were hearts to be won and wills to be inspired; no overmastering force could ever accomplish this. The task can only be wrought out by patience and anguish, by Cross and Passion, by Agony and Bloody Sweat. But Love was equal to the need. The sacrifice was offered, and therein the Spirit's masterpiece was wrought. Greater than systems of stars and planets, lovelier than buttercups and bluebells is the gracious loveliness of God in Christ the Saviour. There the Creator Spirit was for the first time perfectly revealed; there the response from the side of the Creation was for the first time perfectly offered, as a first-fruit of the harvest yet to be garnered. Sunsets do not rejoice in their own beauty nor forests give thanks to the Lord who made them. He rejoices in them, but they cannot share His joy. Some day, on this earth or elsewhere, there will be a human race living as one brotherhood and fellowship in the bonds of a love that unites all to the common Father and Saviour and in Him to one another, their whole life one act of ceaseless thanksgiving. Then will God be perfectly manifest in the moral as in the physical creation. Order and beauty will have supplanted ugliness and discord; for God, Who is Truth and Beauty and Love, will then be all in all; and the moving of the Spirit on the face of the waters will have issued in such perfection of loveliness in the world as fitly to answer the Creator's love.

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CLOVIS CHAPPELL

1882-



CLOVIS CHAPPELL, photograph, courtesy of Clovis Chappell.

CLOVIS GILLHAM CHAPPELL

- 1882 *Born January 8 in Flatwood, Tennessee*
- 1902 *Attended Duke University*
- 1904 *Attended Harvard University*
- 1908 *Married Cecil Hart; ordained to the ministry in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, beginning a long series of pastorates*
- 1920 *Received D.D. from Duke University*
- 1921 *Wrote first book of sermons, The Village Tragedy*
- 1932 *Began pastorate of First Methodist Church, Birmingham, Alabama*
- 1936 *Became pastor of St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Oklahoma City*
- 1941 *Began pastorate of Galloway Memorial Methodist Church, Jackson, Mississippi*
- 1945 *Accepted pastorate of First Methodist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina*
- 1949 *Retired from pastorate and began period of preaching in churches throughout the United States*

FEW MEN have pastored more large, downtown city churches or written more books of sermons than Clovis Chappell. Known widely for his biographical preaching, he preached with a simplicity which touched all classes of people.

LIFE AND TIMES

On January 8, 1882, Clovis Chappell was born in Flatwood, Tennessee, where he grew up on a Tennessee farm, an experience that made a deep impression on his life. Frequently in his sermons he used illustrations from his boyhood farm days. His education was obtained both in the South and in the North: he

attended schools in Tennessee; he was a student at Duke University from 1902 until 1903; he studied at Harvard University from 1904 to 1905. Honorary degrees were conferred on him by Duke, Centenary College of Louisiana, and Birmingham-Southern College.

In 1908 two significant events occurred in his life: Chappell married Cecil Hart, and he was ordained to the ministry in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Two children blessed the marriage, Bob Hart and Clovis Gillham, and numerous churches were blessed by his ministry. He pastored successively in Gatesville, Texas; the Epworth Methodist Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; the Highland Park Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas; Mount Vernon Place Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.; the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tennessee; the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas; the First Methodist Church, Birmingham, Alabama; St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church, Oklahoma City; Galloway Memorial Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi; the First Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. Most of his pastorates in these large city churches lasted from four to five years.

As a busy city pastor who was much in demand for speaking engagements outside of his own church, Chappell still found time to write. After 1921 he published a book of sermons almost every year. Most of these books of sermons contained biographical preaching; simple, colorful, to the point, they attracted a wide readership.

In 1949 Chappell retired from the active pastorate. He began a period of preaching in churches all over the nation, an activity he pursued for over twenty years. His preaching was by no means limited to Methodist churches; he was welcomed in the churches of almost all denominations.

Though he lived through tumultuous times, his sermons are largely biographical and historical. World War I, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and World War II apparently had little direct influence upon his sermon themes. Though he attacked sin directly, and constantly spoke words of hope to sick humanity, he was more general than specific in dealing with national issues. When he did deal with a current issue, his basic conservative bent was evident.

Chappell dabbled very little in affairs outside of church activities. His time was consumed with preaching, pastoring,

and writing books of sermons. Never a controversial figure, he was popular and well received. He will be remembered primarily as a preacher who appealed to the common man, who was diligent in his duties as a churchman, and who made Bible characters come alive in a modern age. He dealt with Bible characters as if they lived just down the street, and this homey quality gave his life and preaching wide appeal.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Chappell considered himself a biblical preacher and always began his sermons with a text. He wrote:

Whether preaching by series or not, I always use a text. Probably I began to employ this method because it was in vogue when I entered the ministry. I have continued to use it through the years because of a very profound conviction that Bible-centered preaching is at once the most helpful and the least taxing.¹

Chappell frequently preached from a single verse or even a portion of one, but his sermons were usually taken from the larger context. This is mainly due to his emphasis upon biographical preaching, at which he was exceptionally gifted; he must be ranked among the finer biographical preachers the church has produced.

He had an unusual ability to read between the lines of a text and derive legitimate inferences from it. For example, in explaining the elder brother's attitude in the parable of the prodigal son, Chappell wrote:

It was not the fault of the father, but the fault of the son. This boy, in spite of his sonship, had insisted on treating his father as a slave owner rather than as a father. Such an attitude had made it impossible for the father to do what he longed to do. Even while this son was living as a slave, this was his privilege: "Son thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine."²

1. Clovis Chappell, *Anointed to Preach* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 76.

2. Clovis Chappell, *If I Were Young* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1945), p. 173.

Chappell regarded the form of a sermon as important. He said, "It is therefore a matter of fundamental importance that the sermon have a simple, logical, and concise outline. It ought to start, travel, and arrive."³ At this point his results are mixed: occasionally his sermons do in practice what he recommended; they start, travel, and arrive. In other cases they start and travel, but when they arrive at their destination they have been over an exceptionally winding road.

In all fairness to Chappell, however, when this defect occurs it is usually due to the biographical nature of the textual material. The life story of individuals is rarely "simple, logical, and concise"; as a result, the sermon outline on that life doesn't have those qualities either. For example, in two of his sermons, "The Woman of the Shattered Romances" and "The Village Tragedy"—both excellent sermons—there are no major divisions at all. But these are narrative sermons and should not be criticized as didactic presentations.

Others of his sermons follow an organic manner of development—again a method which does not appear to have unity—but one which possesses a natural, living coherence of the finest sort. For example, in "Needless Poverty—James," Chappell's outline does not appear on the surface to have unity:

- I. There is a sense of lack in our experience.
- II. What is the secret of our lack?
- III. When we pray as we ought, our prayer avails much.

The sermon also contains eight subpoints, three under the second major division and five under the third; but this general outline is sufficient for purposes of illustration.

Any professor of homiletics would regard such a sermon as badly out of joint, at least on first appearance. The truth is, the sermon is an excellent example of what is sometimes called a "tree sermon"; the development follows an organic style. First the need or the origin of the problem is presented; it is the basis of the problem, or the foundation of the development, as the roots of a tree. A second point grows out of the first: the answer to our need—in this case, prayer—grows out of the first point, as the trunk grows from the roots of the tree. The third point reveals the results of our prayer, and in that sense resembles

3. Chappell, *Anointed to Preach*, p. 81.

the branches and leaves of a tree which spring from the trunk. An older homiletics would have regarded the sermon as badly marred—in spite of the fact that a congregation would experience no difficulty in following it. This natural, organic style of development does not seem to be as logical as the older analytical method of presentation; but in reality such a method is far easier to follow and, in this case, more truly represents the essence of the text.

Some of Chappell's sermon titles are excellent: "Wanted: Alive"; "The Slave of the Second Best"; "A Good Man's Hell"; "The Successful Failure"; "The Woman of the Shattered Romances." Many of his titles, as many of his outlines, are stated in past tense. Ordinarily this is also considered to be a flaw, but biographical preaching has more latitude for past tense statement than other methods.

Chappell's introductions follow a rather set pattern: usually he begins by reconstructing the biblical scene of his text in an interesting way, and then he relates it to the present-day situation. If there is any major criticism of his introductions, it would be that he devotes too much time to the historical setting before beginning his application. Again, this is due to the biographical style; but even so, occasionally scene descriptions dominate, and the basic theme becomes subordinate to historical description.

When he does begin his application, Chappell excels; he understood the average man and knew how to talk to him. He spoke on the practical level where men live and used language that could be understood. At times some of his expressions are gripping: "To understand all knowledge, and all mysteries, and have no love is only to be a human icicle, just as glittering, perhaps, but also just as hard and cold."⁴

Chappell's creative use of imagination is evident in one of his sermons on the parables:

The other son shocks us. His answer is a brazen and brutal "I will not." There is no slightest hint in his answer of either respect or courtesy. He makes no promise of obedience at all. Instead he is frank and open in his rebellion. By and by, however, he changes his mind. Perhaps the pain that looked out from his father's eyes

4. Clovis Chappell, *Values That Last* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1939), p. 54.

made him restless and wretched. Maybe the remembrance of the sacrifices that his father had made on his own behalf caused his face to burn with shame.⁵

As in the case of most good biographical preachers, Chappell's sermons reveal an unusual insight into human nature. He understood people and the common experiences of life.

Chappell's oral style reflected an understanding of conversational delivery. He spoke slowly—perhaps sometimes too slowly—but his deliberate and forceful manner added to his effectiveness. His style of speech can best be described as “folksy.” His printed sermons do not give an indication of the amount of humor he involved in his sermons as they were actually delivered—particularly those sermons that were delivered for special occasions, conferences, and assemblies.

The previously unpublished sermons included in this study are among his best; they were graciously provided by Chappell for special inclusion in this publication.

5. Clovis Chappell, *Sermons from the Parables* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1933), pp. 85-86.

Sermons

THE SENSUALIST

“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright” (Hebrews 12:16).

ESAU and Jacob were not only brothers; they were twins. But though so close together, there was a chasm between them as wide as the spaces between the stars. When Jacob comes upon the scene, he is about everything that we do not like. He has a winning way of being hated. Esau is the opposite. He is the kind of man that in any age would have many friends. Think how popular he would have been in a modern college! He would have grappled those who knew him to him with hoops of steel.

It is rather startling, therefore, the vast difference in the influence that these two men had upon their own day and upon subsequent generations. Jacob, who had so little that was commendable, became, by the grace of God, a prince and a servant of mankind. Esau, on the other hand, who had such vast treasure, so nearly squandered that treasure that he has his place in the rogue's gallery, not because he was a scoundrel, but because in spite of so much that was good he made a mess of the business of living. Jacob, then, impresses us as a man who had very little and made much out of it. Esau had much and made practically nothing out of it.

I

Glance at Esau's fine qualities.

1. He was a splendid animal. He had a magnificent body. That is a great asset. He was a born athlete. The tan of healthy summer suns was on his face. He was a man of the out-of-doors. He was first in the chase. He was doubtless first in all the athletic sports of his day. Had he lived in our time, he might have been an all-American fullback or a Lou Gehrig on a baseball team.

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Not only was he strong and skillful in the use of his fine body, but he was courageous. His courage was largely physical. I doubt that he would have stood up in a moral battle. He would hardly have thought it worthwhile. But physical courage was his in abundance. He pitted himself against the wild beasts of his day when he was little better armed than the beasts themselves. He was a man who would have stood up in any sort of physical fight. He would have so conducted himself that his enemy must have taken knowledge of him. A fine strong animal he was.

2. He was possessed of gentleness and kindness to an amazing degree. Remember he lived long ago in a crude iron age. He was strong and athletic. We would hardly have expected gentleness and kindness from one so brawny. Yet he is one of the kindest men, one of the gentlest, that we meet upon the pages of the Old Testament. He was kind at a place and under circumstances where kindness was not easy.

Where did he show his kindness? Answer—at home. That is a place where kindness is not always easy. I am thinking now of a very charming and gracious young woman I knew years ago. In the social circle she seemed the embodiment of kindness. I have known few people who had such a knack of making friends. She could sell herself to all and sundry, seemingly without the least trouble—she seemed so genuinely kind. But at home with a lovely mother who was a great sufferer, her kindness was not conspicuous. Sometimes she treated that mother with a harshness that she would not have shown to the rankest stranger. When I buried her mother in later years, it was the memory of that unkindness, I think, that went far toward breaking the daughter's heart.

The married life of Isaac and Rebekah had started beautifully. But little by little they had grown apart. Isaac was an easygoing, placid man, while Rebekah was aggressive and managing. Little by little she henpecked her flabby husband out of all self-respect. As the years went by, he came to count for less and less. He grew old before his time. He lost his eyesight. In fact, he seems to have lost almost everything except his appetite. He degenerated into an unattractive, blind glutton whose one enjoyment seems to have been eating.

Who prepared the dainty dishes for this unattractive old dotard? It was not foxy Jacob. It was not even Rebekah, the wife who had once loved him. The man who saw that he was fed with the kind of food that he liked was this breezy hunter Esau. Being a man of the out-of-doors, he must have hated cooking as he hated all housework. It is, therefore, beautiful to see this brawny man taking time to become nursemaid to his unattractive father. That was kindness at its best.

Then, he gave another proof of his kindness in this: when Jacob had cheated him, when he had robbed him of the blessing that he was desperately eager to possess, Esau's anger blazed fiercely. He made up his mind then and there that this scheming, cheating brother of his

should pay for his trickery with his life. But he refused to kill him at once. This he did not because he was afraid of the law. This he did not because he was afraid of his own conscience. He held his hand and submitted with quiet rage to his fortune because he did not wish to hurt his old father. He knew it would break the poor old man's heart to have one brother kill the other; so for his sake he held his hand. Esau was kind not simply in the social circle, but at home, and to the least attractive member of the family, his father.

3. Then Esau was generous. He was not grasping and greedy and selfish, as was his brother Jacob. When this brother of his was returning to the land of his fathers, he sent Esau a series of presents. Even in his gifts Jacob is still the same foxy man. He sends Esau one present hard upon the heels of another. He is going to melt him down. But when the two brothers stand face to face, Esau tells him that his gifts are not necessary. "I have enough," he declares, with fine generosity. Such a declaration is neither a Jewish nor an Anglo-Saxon characteristic. It is seldom any of us have enough. But Esau was not grasping and greedy. He was generous.

Then, his generosity is even more conspicuous in his forgiveness of his brother. Jacob had deeply wronged him. There was a time when he blazed in hot and justifiable anger against him. But he never allowed his anger to harden into hate. That was all to the good. His hatred might have hurt Jacob. It certainly would have worked disaster to himself. When, therefore, this frightened brother of his came home, Esau was abundant in his forgiveness. Jesus must have read this story with approval for he uses practically the same language that is used here in his marvelous story of the prodigal son. "When Esau saw Jacob, he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." It took a generous heart to forgive in that fashion. When, therefore, we see a man with such magnificent gifts, it becomes all the more tragic that he allows these fine gifts largely to go to waste.

II

What was wrong with Esau? The writer to the Hebrews with fine insight puts his finger on two fatal defects in the character of this delightful and lovable man.

1. He was a fornicator. The better translation of the word is sensualist. Esau was a sensualist. The word *sensual* in our time has come to be very restricted in its meaning. It refers chiefly to one who is addicted to sexual vice. But here it is used in its broader and more correct meaning. Esau was a sensualist in that he lived in the realm of the senses. He was what we today would call a secularist. He had an eye for the seen and for the seen only.

Now that was a tragic defect. To have an appreciation only for what we can see, for what our hands can handle and our ears can hear, is to miss those finer values that really count. Of course, man must have

bread. His physical body cries out for it. But he cannot live by bread alone. To this fact Esau was utterly blind. He did not hate religion—he was simply not interested in it. He did not scorn the church—he ignored it. He did not aggressively fight against God—he merely forgot His existence.

It is evident that Esau has had a great many blood brothers in this respect. There are those still who see only the seen. They are interested only in those values that they can rattle in their hands and deposit in a bank. The only pleasures they know are the pleasures of the flesh. These are always self-cheating. Not only do they cheat themselves, but they cheat their fellows. They are robbed in life. They are robbed eternally when they come to the end of the journey. For the things that are seen are temporal. They won't last. The things that are not seen are eternal and these are life's only eternal values. Esau, the sensualist, was so busy grasping at the seen that he missed the unseen altogether. This he did, I repeat, not because he was antagonistic to the unseen. He was unconscious of it. He was hardly aware of its existence.

2. A second tragic flaw in the character of Esau was that he was a profane man. The word profane has also come to have a restricted meaning. When we say that a man is profane today, we generally mean that he uses foul language—that he is addicted to the habit of swearing. A man who swears is profane. But swearing is just one of the streams that flow out from a profane heart. The word *profane* comes from two Latin words—*pro*, in front of, and *fane*, the temple. The temple itself is a holy place. Certain values are kept within it. Certain evils are shut out of it. But a profane man is one that has no fence around his life. He lets his soul become a common. Any cloven-footed devil can romp across that common at will.

Thus Esau was profane. He let his fences fall down and there were no high spiritual values that he found it necessary to fence in and conserve. There were few glaring evils that he shut out. There are few tragedies worse than the tragedy of the unfenced life. He had much that was fine, but he had no holy place. There were no bracing convictions that said to the surrounding evils, "You shall not pass."

This is a temptation that belongs to every day. It is one that is especially fierce in our permissive day. It is not easy at any time to keep up our fences. That fight is more intense in times of crisis such as those through which we are now passing. Let me urge you to hold fast those values that are real, to keep up your fences against those evils large and small that devastate and lay waste life. The man who keeps up his fences says of certain duties, "I must do this," of all evils, "I cannot do that."

Here, for instance, is a young man, brilliant and gifted—Joseph, by name. He has been sold into slavery, taken from the life of a nomad to be thrown in the midst of the perils of the city. He becomes a favorite man in a wealthy family. The wife of his master literally flings herself

at him. But he keeps his head. He keeps his self-respect. He keeps himself where God can give him the best. This he does by keeping up his fences. In the face of his temptation he asks this question: "Can I do this great evil and sin against God?" There were certain things that were for him impossible.

Here is another. He is perhaps sixteen years of age. He is a war casualty. He has been taken by despotic power from the city of his fathers and flung down amid the bewildering splendors of Babylon. In Babylon he has been singled out from the crowd because he was a youth of unusual promise. He has a chance for a place in the palace of the king if he will only play his cards right. But when he is made to recline at his first meal, he sees before him dishes that he cannot eat with a clear conscience. So what? He refuses to be profane. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." Thus keeping up his fences he did not allow his garden to become a common.

III

What effect did these qualities have upon Esau's conduct?

1. It caused him to treat the privileges that had come to him through the most ennobling religion of that time as of secondary value. This is evidenced in numberless little ways. It fairly shrieks at us in the kind of marriage he made. When Esau set out to choose a wife he had absolutely no thought of choosing a woman who would help him to stand firm in the faith. He had no thought of choosing a woman who would be a proper mother for his children. He threw himself away on pagan women. The values that were primary, he counted secondary.

2. Then it came out emphatically in the way he treated his birthright. Let me remind you again of that scene. Esau is coming home from the chase. He is desperately hungry. He must have some food and have it right at once. He cannot wait. Like a certain character in modern fiction, he cannot be bothered resisting the things that he wants. He wants what he wants when he wants it. "Let me gulp down that red stuff," he said. He must have satisfaction for his physical needs, and have it at once.

"All right, my brother," says Jacob. "But first sell me your birthright." Why did Jacob make such a proposal? Because he knew that Esau's birthright was for sale. He would never have dared make such a proposal if this fine and generous brother of his had not been treating the matter with contempt through the years. No man sells his birthright in a single moment. No man stands at his own front door and leaps into the pit at a single bound. Doctor Jekyll does not become Mr. Hyde in a single hour. Esau had been making petty sales of his birthright through the years. The sale that he made now was but the climax of many days of failure.

Even here he hesitates for a moment to make the fatal decision. Then he adds, "I'm about to die." That is equal to saying, "I must live"—a

proposition with which we can in no sense agree. "I am about to die. Then what good will the birthright be to me?" So Jacob dished up the beans and we read this revealing word: "He sat down and ate and drank and rose up and went his way." That is almost a summary of Esau's life. When Moses began to do business in the world, his people were slaves. When he finished, his people were free. Esau, what did you do? "When I came on stage, this dish was full of beans. Now it is empty. That is all." He gulped down the beans, drew the sleeve of his goatskin coat across his greasy lips, and swaggered into oblivion.

The next morning he doubtless did not miss the birthright. His aim was as true as ever. The skies were just as blue above his head. The chase was just as thrilling. His birthright, the privilege of being the religious leader of his clan — what did that amount to, anyway? At first there were no regrets. But not even a sensualist, not even a profane man, can keep that attitude always. There came a time when Esau's heart grew hungry. There came a time when he had hungers that beans could not satisfy. There came a time when the thrill of the chase no longer met his need. "Afterward," says the writer. That is an arresting word. "Afterward" — take it in your hand and look at it. Whatever choice you make, whatever turning you take, remember this — there is always an afterward. You can make any turn you want. But having taken the turn, you cannot choose the afterward. That you must face whether you like it or not.

Afterward — when he would have inherited the blessing he found no place for repentance though he sought it diligently with tears. What does that mean? Does it mean that God would not forgive him? By no means. There is no sin that God will not forgive if we repent. Though you might fling away every beautiful year of your life, if you were really to turn to Him in the last hour of twilight, He would accept you and forgive you. What the author is saying is this — that Esau found no way of undoing the past. When he repented, God saved his soul, but he could not save his life. He could not restore to Esau his wasted years. He could not put into his hands again the opportunity he had thrown away in life's bright morning long ago.

That is an arresting fact. Repentance will always bring salvation, but it will not undo the past. Therefore it is not enough to repent. The only wise course is to repent before you sin. It is beautiful to see the Prodigal come home. It is beautiful to watch his father run and fall on his neck and kiss him. It thrills us to watch him find a place at the feast of the fullness of life. But there might have been a scene better than that. He might never have gone into the far country. But since he went, I am sure that there was many a fine chap that he met on his way down and helped toward the swine-pen that he did not meet when he came home. There is a repentance that saves the soul and leaves the life in ruins. There is a far better repentance that saves both the soul and the life. That is the one to which God calls us in these words — "Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation."

I'D RISK SOMETHING

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep" (Psalm 107:23-24).

THE JEWS as a rule were not a seafaring people. They dreaded the sea. It was to them a thing of menace and of mystery. To venture upon the sea was to make a most dangerous adventure. It might involve almost every possible loss. It meant to give up life in a sedate and quiet village. It meant the surrender of the fellowship of friends. It meant the giving up of worship in the synagogue or in the Temple. It meant the departure from their native land. It meant homesickness, seasickness. It might even involve death among the crawling things at the bottom of the ocean. It might mean to lie uncoffined at last far from the sepulchres of their fathers. So great was the dread of the sea that when the Seer of Patmos wrote about that good world that he saw ahead, it was a world not marred by dividing oceans and sundering seas. So he wrote, "And there was no more sea."

But while the Jew realized that the man who ventured upon the sea ran a great risk, he also was honest enough to face the further fact that such a risk might bring vast gain. He could not fail to see that while the voyager had to risk more than the nonvoyager, he also saw more. If he faced dangers that others did not face, he had the thrill of great experiences in which these others could not share. He had a breadth of view that was impossible to the man that remained in the security of his native village. Therefore he wrote, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters" — while they live dangerously, they also may live gloriously, for — "These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

I

This ancient psalmist discovered a great truth. He discovered that all life involves risk, that to live grandly we must dare grandly. He discovered that there is a profound sense in which every man is a gambler. To venture nothing is to gain nothing. To venture much is often to gain much. In fact, he would have us believe that the more wholeheartedly we dare, the greater will be our return — that the only way to win the best, that the only way to win largely, is to venture largely. Without any adventure, there can be no real gains. Everything we do in this world has in it an element of risk.

1. It is a great risk to be born an immortal soul such as we are. Of course, it is one about which you and I were not consulted. But had we been consulted, the question would not have been altogether one-

sided. Were it up to you tonight to decide whether you should be born a man or born into one of the lower orders of life, I could urge some very good reasons for your refusing to take such a risk. I should not wonder that, having faced these risks, some of us would choose the lower road.

For instance, I could tell you that I have been up and down among men where cross the crowded ways of life and that I have seen much disappointment, much disillusionment, much heartache. I have seen men take the lower road that dipped down to where it lost itself in the quagmire of desolation and despair. I have seen infants sinking like a stricken flower to the grave. I have seen a strong man fiercely breathing out his soul on the field of battle. I have seen the criminal die upon the scaffold with a deep curse upon his lips. I have looked on tragedy unspeakable.

I have seen a man caught in the toils of his own wrongdoing until he seemed incapable of freeing himself. I have heard his exceeding bitter cry as he said, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" I have heard another with his hands crimson with his brother's blood cry, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness." I have heard another standing in the presence of the mystery of death ask this question through lips white and drawn with pain, "If a man die, shall he live again?" If you dare to be born a man, you run the risk of much suffering, of much heartache.

Now there is an easier way. For instance, you may instead be born a clam. In that case I can assure you that there will be no great suffering. You will never wring your hands, saying, "Out, out, damned spot!" You will never be tormented by a sense of shame. You will never be haunted by ugly yesterdays, misspent and tarnished and thrown away. I have had some acquaintance with clams, but I have never known one to sob or to die of a broken heart.

But of course this clam has to pay a price for his exemption. If he never weeps, neither does he ever laugh. If he never sobs, neither does he sing. If he has no capacity to go greatly wrong, neither does he have any capacity to go greatly right. Being incapable of suffering the pangs of hell, he is equally incapable of enjoying the pleasures of heaven. It is no risk to be born a clam. Even if you end in a hot skillet, the pain is a mere pinprick. But if your losses are small, your gains are equally small.

But while to be born a man does involve great risks, it offers great gains. If as a man I might suffer the pangs of hell, I may also enjoy the raptures of heaven. This very man who cried desperately, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" found an answer to his question. He was saying a moment later, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." This other who was flinging out his prayer for deliverance from blood-guiltiness was a little later singing, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Even the man who was sobbing by

the graveside, "If a man die, shall he live again?" was shouting a little later, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." To be born a man is to risk much. But we also stand to win everything that is really worth winning.

2. Not only is it a venture to be born, but practically all we do in life is a venture. It is a risk to choose our life's work. Nobody knows for an absolute certainty what he can do. When I was thinking of entering the ministry nobody but myself knew my misgivings or the deadly fears that I might be a misfit. Success in life has been defined by Frank Crane as doing what one wishes to do and being able to make a living at it. It is finding your place in the scheme of things. Many fail to do it. The choosing of a life's work is a risk.

Having made our choice, we find risk at every turn of the road. Nobody ever set out to do anything worth doing without having to dare something. There is always a voice, saying, "You might fail. You might fall down. You might make yourself ridiculous. You might earn the laughter and contempt of your fellows." Most of the daring gamblers have done just that. They have ventured in seeming madness while the timid looked on and said, "How silly!"

Here, for instance, is a man named Columbus. He got the idea that this world was not flat but round. How silly! No wonder they called him a crackbrain! No wonder some thought him crazy! But he went on believing it in spite of the fact that he knew it made him ridiculous in the eyes of many. He bet his reputation on his conviction that the world was round. By and by he bet his life. He discovered a new continent because he dared.

About forty years ago two brothers, Wilbur and Orville, made up their minds that they could make a ship that would fly through the air. That was a mad gamble. One sane man declared that nobody would ever make a ship that would fly, but, even assuming that somebody would, that somebody would not be Wilbur and Orville Wright. But they bet their time and their money. They bet their lives on their enterprise. As another has well said, "Every laboratory is a gambling-house in as real a sense as Monte Carlo." Here the scientist bets on a hypothesis and ventures from the known into the unknown. Our life's work is a venture.

3. Marriage is a venture. We have a saying that marriage is a lottery. There is an element of truth in it. It is utterly impossible for any young man or young woman to know beyond a peradventure that they are suited to each other and that they will have the marital bliss of their dreams. This is true even where the bride and groom are honest in their courtship and take time to know one another.

If the risk is real under the best possible circumstances, how much more real it is when we marry recklessly. Some of us, especially in

wartime, seem to play a kind of blindman's bluff at the game, gripping and marrying whomsoever we chance to catch. Sometime ago a lovely young girl asked me to marry her to a soldier, though she knew that that same soldier had already been married once during the present war. She was willing to risk her all on the adventure, though she had not given herself a chance to know the one to whom she was giving her all. If we run a risk under the best of circumstances, how much greater that risk when we marry strangers! You remember in the old story, when Hanna was married, her mistress who had saved her money for her said, "You will be wanting your money now, won't you?" And Hanna looked at her in utter amazement. "Law, no!" she said, "you think I would risk all that money in the house with a strange man?"

But though marriage is a risk, though we have to dare much, we stand a chance to make great gains. In spite of the high stakes most of us, I am happy to say, are willing to gamble on it. This at least is true when we are young. Let a man wait, however, until he is forty and he is usually pretty hard to catch. He has lost his daring. To lasso him is about as easy as catching a wild jack rabbit.

4. Just as it is a risk to marry, so it is a risk to follow through on marriage, that is to share with God in the creation of children. God ran a risk when He created you and me. A husband and wife dare a great deal when they bring a child into the world. This is the case because, shrink from it how they may, they are bound up in a bundle of life with that child. He may disappoint them. He may break their hearts. He may wet their faces with tears. He may teach them "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

But while parents have to run this risk and face this terrible danger, they also have the possibility of winning grandly. So often they do! If I have seen enough sadness in the face of parents whose boy had gone wrong to increase the anguish of hell, I have seen enough gladness in the face of those whose boy had gone right to increase the raptures of heaven. It is a risk to share with God in the creation of a human soul, but it is one that is well worth taking. Such an adventure may help us to know one of the deepest and sweetest secrets of human blessedness.

5. Finally, being a Christian is an adventure. It involves daring. Studdert Kennedy pictures the Roman soldiers shooting dice for the seamless robe of Jesus at the foot of the cross. Then he adds with a kind of reckless reverence,

He was a gambler too,
My Christ;
He took his life
And threw it for a world redeemed.

The poet was right. Jesus was the most daring gambler that ever lived. He bet all that He had on God and the adequacy of God to save a world gone wrong. He staked His all because He believed in God and because He believed in man. Venturing with a fullness unsurpassed, His winnings have also been immeasurable.

These soldiers and James were all gambling, but how infinitely wide the chasm between them! What is wrong with gambling as we know it? Like so many vices, it is a virtue gone wrong. Humility is one of the most Christlike of virtues, but when it degenerates into an inferiority complex, it becomes a vice. Gambling as Jesus did it is the finest of virtues. He was betting not on chance but on a reign of law. He was betting not to win for Himself, but to win for others. But the ordinary gambler has become so degenerated that he wants to get something for nothing, which is a bit criminal. He thinks that he can get something for nothing, which is foolish.

II

Now we are all in a sense gamblers, whether we desire it or not. That is not optional. But what is optional? We can choose that upon which we venture. In the language of the street, we don't have to bet on the wrong horse! There are varied philosophies of life upon which we can adventure. On some philosophy we must adventure whether we will or not. It is up to us to choose a good bet.

1. Take, for instance, the beautiful price of freedom. We talk much of freedom—freedom for the individual, freedom for the nation and for the world. To be free is a consummation devoutly to be wished. But we are by no means agreed as to the road to freedom. There are two philosophies that are exactly opposite each other. How can you and I be really free?

One obvious answer is this: if I am to be free, I must do as I please. I must live my own life. I must brush all thou-shalt-nots out of my way like so many cobwebs. Many have staked their all on that philosophy. It may sound new to you, but it is the oldest story in human history. Mother Eve looked that horse over in the morningtide of the world. In the language of poetry, it was stated in this way: "I am to eat of every tree of the garden except one. If I eat of that, death will be the result." "You shall not surely die," was the answer of the tempter. "You will find a fuller life. You won't find bondage—you will find freedom." Eve bet that the way to be free was to break the law. So betting, she lost.

Her story is not unique. It has been the experience of every single soul that has bet on that horse since then. Here is a ship at sea. It is guided toward its desired haven by a little instrument not much larger than my fist. I say to that great vessel, "I am ashamed of you to be dominated by a little instrument like a compass. Toss it over-

board and do as you please." If the ship listens and throws the compass away, it does not find freedom; it only finds a place in Davy Jones's locker. Go out and bet on lawlessness, and you will become a slave. If everybody that had found that true were to say "Amen," it would shake the world more than all the cannon that are being fired today.

What of the other philosophy? It says that freedom is found not in rebellion but in obedience, not in violation of the law but in obedience to the law. How does electricity become our servant? Not by our defying it but by our obeying it. When Joseph faced the great temptation of his life, he steadied himself with this question: "Can I do this great evil and sin against God?" That decision cost him a prison term, but he had a freedom in the midst of his prison that the lawless never know. You can bet your life that the only way to be free is to be obedient to the law of your being, which is the law of God.

2. Then this same philosophy can be stated in another way. How can I live abundantly? How can I find life rich and satisfying? One answer is this: look out for number one! Live up to this motto: "Every fellow for himself and the devil take the hindmost!" Always say, "Me first!" and "Where do I come in?" Millions have bet on that horse. That is true of all the military despots of the world. It is true of countless nameless souls who have had their little fling and lost.

But there is an opposite philosophy. Jesus uttered it. "If you want to find life," He said, "you must give it. If you want to live in right relation with your fellows, you are not to try to dominate them but to serve them." If you want a guiding principle for abundant living, here it is: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." How much are you willing to bet that Jesus was right and that Caesar was wrong?

III

Then before placing our bet I think it might be well to glance at the experiences of some who have played this game before us. Here are two that we meet upon the pages of the New Testament. One of them is at the rear of the procession. He was a quisling, a traitor to his God and to his country. I daresay he was the best-hated man in Capernaum. He was rich and getting richer, but he had won his money at the price of his honor. He had begun by placing his bet on the belief that the way to live largely was to get abundantly, regardless of the method of the getting. Then one day this man looked up from his ledger into the face of Jesus and Jesus said to him, "Matthew, follow me." And this man bet the fortune for which he had sold his honor. He staked everything on the faith that Jesus was right. He followed Him and he won, as every man has won who has thus dared.

Here is another whose character and whose opportunities were almost infinite distances ahead of those of Matthew. We know him as

the rich young ruler. One day with a high faith and expectancy, he ran down the road to kneel at the feet of Jesus. He was seeking the abundant life. "What shall I do," he asked Jesus as he looked wistfully into his face, "that I may have eternal life?" "Go thy way," said the Master. "Sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." But we read of him that he went away grieved. He went away. He bet on the wrong philosophy and lost.

How will you place your bet? Maybe your religious faith has grown a bit vague. Maybe you find yourself at this moment amidst a welter of uncertainties. But you are going to stake your life on some philosophy. Perhaps some of you will say, "I bet that the best way to be free is to destroy the law. I bet that I can come to my best by sacrificing upon every wayside altar. I bet that I can take pleasure where it is offered before marriage and afterward. I bet that the sure way to win is to look out for number one! I bet that the best way to build the new world is to live in isolation and let every other nation go to hell in its own way."

Even though there are those that may bet in this fashion, I have confidence that there are others that will dare to risk their all on the opposite. Here some young man, some young woman will say, "I bet whatever may be the laxity of the circle in which I move that it is better to be clean than unclean. I bet that this body of mine is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that it ought to be treated with reverence. I bet that marriage is a high and holy relationship instituted of God that is to last until death. I bet that life comes to its best not from getting but from giving. I bet that the only way to build a better world is unselfishly to recognize myself as a part of the world and my brother's keeper. In short, I bet on Jesus Christ and His way of life. Upon Him I venture my all. While others may shrink, while others may say,

Upon a rock stands prone my soul,
A diver, lean, undressed,
And looks and fears the shock,
And turns and hides its shame
In some poor sorry jest,

I myself will dare the shock in the firm faith that no life staked on God can ever fail."

GREAT LIVING

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

THIS TEXT is a bit of thank-you note that Paul sent to some dear friends who had shared his need in difficult days. They are evidently the words of a man who lived grandly. Indeed it is impossible to get a glimpse of his face across the space of the centuries without a thrill. That is the way we feel that a man should use life. That is the way I should like to use my own. It would be hard to exaggerate this great personality. Certain nations might be dropped into the sea without being missed as much as we should miss this one tremendous man. What is his secret? We cannot share his genius, but we can share something of his greatness.

I

He was a man of one dominant purpose.

1. He could say, "This one thing I do." It matters not how gifted and many-sided one may be, if that one never decides what he is going to do with his gifts, he will likely squander them for a poor second-best. However excellent his car may be, and however abundant his supply of power, if he does not know where he is going, he will likely wear out his machine and burn up his power without reaching any worthy goal.

Someone has called attention to the fact that Coleridge had a genius almost equal to that of Shakespeare. Had he written all the books he dreamed of writing, he would have left a small library. But all he left were a few glittering fragments to show how vastly gifted he was. He never could say, "This one thing I do." On the other hand, however mediocre one may be, if that one will only allow God to enable him to say, "This one thing I do," he can become, and he can accomplish, what would forever otherwise be impossible.

2. Not only was Paul a man of one dominant purpose, but his purpose was of supreme worth. Suppose you could lay hands upon your supreme ambition this day, how much better off would you be? Years ago I went to perform a marriage ceremony. Some pranksters had gotten hold of the honeymoon car and draped the rear of that car with a large placard. In an upper corner there was the picture of a snarling man; in a lower corner, the picture of an equally snarling woman. "When you get what you want you don't want it," the placard growled.

Sad to say, that is sometimes true – not only of husbands and wives, but of many other prizes. Most of us sell out too cheaply.

Some years ago a company of youths standing on the banks of the Tennessee River when it was in flood, saw a rabbit swim and take refuge on a stack of lumber some two hundred yards from the bank. One of the boys, knowing that rabbits are poor swimmers and hate water, said, "I'm going out and catch that rabbit." He was sure the rabbit would be less afraid of him than of the raging water. His supposition was right. He caught the rabbit with his bare hands, knocked its head against the plank, and put it in the pocket of his overall, got into his canoe and started toward shore.

But he was not skillful in the handling of his boat. He struck a cross-current, the canoe capsized, and he was drowned. When they found his body three days later, one of the boys who was present at the tragedy came and drew that dead rabbit out of his pocket and held it up and said, "That is what he gave his life for." He sold out too cheaply.

Some of you may have read a charming little book of a generation ago called *Santa Claus' Partner*. The hero of the story was a brilliant young chap with a genius for making money. He had started from scratch and was rapidly growing rich. A fine old friend asked him, "Jim, what is your ambition?" "I am going to be worth a million," was his prompt answer. "Why do you wish to be worth a million?" "So I can tell the other fellow to go to hell," was the disappointing reply.

Now in saying this, Jim did not mean to be as brutal as he sounded. What he meant was, I want to be worth a million so I can be absolutely independent. But, of course, he was speaking out of the abundance of his youthful ignorance. Nobody is ever completely independent. In fact, the greater our wealth, the greater is the number on whom we must depend. If I owned a little grocery store in this town with twenty customers, I should be in a measure dependent on twenty people. But if I owned a chain of stores stretching from New York to San Francisco, I should be dependent on millions.

Were Isaiah to walk our crowded streets as he once walked the streets of Jerusalem, he would again throw up his hands in amazed horror, crying, "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not meat and you labor for that which satisfieth not?" Most of us sell out too cheaply.

I bargained with life for a penny, and life would give no more,
However I begged, at evening when I counted my scanty
store.

For life is a just employer; she gives us what we ask,
But once we have set the wages, then we must bear the task.
I worked for a menial's hire, only to learn dismayed,
Whatever I'd asked of life, life would have gladly paid.¹

1. Jessie Belle Rittenhouse, "My Wage," *The Door of Dreams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., n.d.). Used by permission.

What was this prize of supreme worth that Paul was seeking? He was seeking "to take hold of that for which Christ once took hold of me." That is, it was Paul's conviction that he had been created and redeemed for a purpose. Hence his supreme ambition was to realize that purpose, and so do the will of God. He knew that to flout the will of God was to make ultimate victory impossible. He was sure also that to do the will of God was to make ultimate defeat impossible, even though he should have to live in a whirlwind and die in a storm.

II

Not only was Paul a man of one worthy purpose, but he set about achieving that purpose in a most common-sense way. It was Jesus who declared that the saints do not always exercise as much wisdom in pursuit of their goals as the sinners. "The children of this age are in their generation wiser than the children of the light." But no child of this age ever exercised a greater sanity in gaining his purpose than did Paul in gaining his. How, I repeat, did he go about it?

1. There were some things Paul kept. For instance he kept a wastebasket and every day as he went through the desk of life, he threw into the wastebasket everything that would hinder him in achieving his purpose. He kept only those things that would help him. He put it like this, "Forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth to those things that are before." Now when Paul said he forgot what was behind, he did not mean that he forgot everything that was behind. That would be at once impossible and immoral. When Paul in going through the desk of life found any unpaid bills, any unfilled pledges, he did not throw them away.

If in going through the desk of life you should find any unpaid bills, even if they are owed to the church, do not throw them away. Do not throw away your marriage vows. Millions are doing just that. Do not throw away your church vows. You did not make those vows to the congregation. You made them to the Christ of the Church. Don't dare throw them away. "A promise made is a debt unpaid."

Do not throw away the favors that have been shown you. Paul was constantly lifting some unknown saint into immortality by expressing his gratitude for a remembered kindness. When a gentleman said recently, "Nobody ever showed me a favor," at once I knew two facts about him: first, he was a grouch; second, he was not telling the truth. Everybody has been the recipient of many a kindness. I have had so many that I am ashamed that I have not shown more.

A few months ago as I was driving home one night, in the pouring rain, I had a puncture. When I drew to the side of the road to change the tire, I found that I did not even have a screwdriver to remove the hubcap. For a moment I was at an utter loss. Then a light suddenly blazed behind me. A young chap, a total stranger, got out and asked if I was in trouble. "I certainly am. I have a puncture and don't even

have a screwdriver to get the hubcap off." "I will lend you one," he said, and he hurried away. When he came back I think the light was shining a little better on my face than at first. Looking me over he saw that I had a touch of Methuselititis. "I will fix it for you," he said, as if it were a great privilege. So in that pouring rain he set himself to the accomplishment of that ugly task.

Naturally I was fairly brimming over with appreciation. I was almost desperately eager to let this young stranger know of my gratitude. But there was nothing I could think of to do except talk religion to him. Gladly I set myself to this task. But I'll be dogged if he wasn't a Baptist. Believe me, I have not only loved my helper, but the whole waterlogged lot ever since. They are a wonderful people and are making a great contribution.

Not only did Paul keep his gratitude for the kindnesses of friends, but above all for the tender mercies of God. Paul had suffered for his faith. He had been battered and stoned so many times that his body was little more than a scar. Yet his song of gratitude never hushed. This because having a radiant yesterday in which to stroll around now and then, he was constantly mindful of the mercies of God.

2. But some things he, as we, must throw away. Throw away the slights and insults that may come to you on the way. Collect old coins, if you like, or rare stamps, but don't collect grudges. I used to get a great many anonymous letters. Some of those letters were as sweet as honeysuckle. Some timid souls that felt that I had helped them were giving me a secret pat on the back. But most of them were the opposite. I think the bitterest one that I ever had was while I was pastor at First Church, Memphis. It was a terror. As I read it I could not but wonder how it got through the post office without setting it on fire. It should have been written on asbestos. Naturally as soon as I finished that poisonous letter I hurried to the bank to tuck it into my safe-deposit box. This I did so I could read it every morning to keep myself angry. "Nobody," you say, "would be that foolish." But millions are. They file away and keep that which will make them at once miserable and mean.

I did not take that course. As well as I remember, I looked at that letter and said to myself, "This chap is trying to get under my skin. I am already there. I am not going to move over and make room for him." Today I haven't the slightest idea of who wrote that letter, or what he said. But I do know this. He wasted his time. Though I served as pastor for more than forty years, I can still hold all the grudges in my eye that I have accumulated.

Finally, throw away your sins when you have repented of them. Here is one of the most radiant promises God ever made: "I will forgive iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." If the worst man in the city would repent this morning, our Lord would not only forgive him, but would forget his soiled yesterday. What God forgets, we

have a right to forget. We do not honor Him by constantly torturing ourselves by the memory of an ill-spent past.

III

But how can we forget?

I can tell you how you cannot forget. You will not forget by clenching your fist and squaring your jaw and saying, "I have will power. I am going to forget." The harder you try to forget in that fashion, the better you will remember. It is a bit like going to sleep. Do you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? You have a heavy day coming up tomorrow and you tell yourself, "I must go to sleep." Then you bend your energies in pursuit of sleep, and you become about as victorious as a tortoise in pursuit of a hare. You can't forget by making your mind a vacuum.

How did Paul forget the past? By fixing his eyes on the future. That will sound comforting to some, but not to others. "I am old," you may say. "The future doesn't have much for me." Perhaps not so far as this present world is concerned, but if you are a Christian, far the best is yet to be. Whatever your yesterday may have been, tomorrow can be far better. Look at a few of the values on which you can even now fix your gaze.

1. Your Lord is still ahead. You may have run past many opportunities, many heartaches, many joys, but you haven't run past Him yet. Another has pointed out how the geographers of the long ago, having made a map of their narrow known world, would then write on the wide seas such words as these: "Here be demons." "Here be dragons that devour men."

But there was a certain saint who lived in that dark day who had a sunnier reading of things. As he looked into the world of terrors, he saw no demons and dragons, he saw God. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit or whither shall I flee from their presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." What is ahead for us? Sickness? Loneliness? Death? Yes, but as we face all these we need fear no evil, for God is there.

2. Eternity is ahead. Time is very short, yet we need not get feverish. We have as much time as God has. This is the case because eternity is ahead. There are those who tell us that it doesn't matter to them whether life goes on or not. But that it does go on is a fact. You cannot change a fact, whatever your attitude. When I hear one say it doesn't matter to me in the least whether there is any afterlife or not, I know what the chances are that he is thinking only of himself, or that he is not thinking at all. God has set eternity in our hearts. Therefore life goes on.

3. Because God and eternity are ahead, Christlikeness is ahead. As Christians we are not now vastly impressive. The beauty of our Lord

does not rest upon us as it should. But there is coming a day when this will no longer be the case. As a certain Scotch saint used to say, "One day the very angels of God will look at you and me and say, 'How very like Jesus Christ she is.' 'How like Jesus Christ he is.' Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Finally, home is ahead. There is perhaps no road that leads back to the home of our childhood. But there is a wide-open road that leads into that other home where a place is prepared for each one of us. Therefore, though much has been taken, far more abides. Our Lord is ahead. Eternity is ahead. Christlikeness is ahead. Home is ahead. Surely "the best is yet to be." Therefore as a recipe for great living, I know of no word better than this: "Forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press forward to the mark that is the prize."

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT CLOVIS G. CHAPPELL:

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G. A. STUDDERT
KENNEDY

1883-1929



G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY, photograph, courtesy of Hodder & Stoughton.

GEOFFREY ANKETELL STUDDERT KENNEDY

- 1883 *Born in Leeds on June 27*
- 1902 *Took double first-class honors at Trinity College, Dublin*
- 1904 *Won silver medal for scholarship at Trinity College*
- 1907 *Studied at Ripon Clergy College*
- 1908 *Ordained by the bishop of Worcester*
- 1914 *Became vicar of St. Paul's in Worcester, England*
- 1915 *Entered army as a chaplain*
- 1917 *Won Military Cross for bravery as a chaplain in World War I*
- 1919 *Appointed a royal chaplain*
- 1922 *Became rector of a parish in London*
- 1929 *Died on March 7*

"WOODBINE WILLIE" seems a strange nickname for an Anglican priest. But G. A. Studdert Kennedy wore it proudly. It was given to him by the battered troops of the British forces to whom he ministered in World War I. The name actually came from the "Woodbine" cigarettes he gave to the troops. But the army nickname also suggests two other things about Studdert Kennedy: he was loved and respected by the common people, and he was a fighter.

LIFE AND TIMES

G. A. Studdert Kennedy was born in Leeds on June 27, 1883. His father was vicar of a downtown Leeds parish. He grew up among the desperately poor. As a boy he encountered the two basic passions of his life, the church and social reform. Throughout his life he would minister in places where these interests

were met most urgently: he was a curate at Rugby in an industrial neighborhood; later he became his father's curate in his slum parish in Leeds; next he became vicar of St. Paul's, Worcester, where he ministered to three thousand persons in a poverty-racked area; and during World War I he served as a chaplain.

Though noted for his unconventional speech and shocking manners, he had been reared in a cultured home and attended fine schools. A brilliant scholar, he took two first-class honors in 1902 at Trinity College in Dublin. Two years later he won a silver medal at Trinity for scholarship. His training at Ripon Clergy College stretched the horizons of his mind and deepened his intellectual ability.

From the beginning of his ministry Studdert Kennedy showed the relevance of the gospel to the deepest needs of men and society. He was a fighter—a fighter for social justice and human rights. At Rugby, as one of the many curates on the staff of the parish church, he immediately began to minister to the down-and-outs. His unconventional sermons shocked the hearers. But his superiors supported him in his stand.

While at Leeds he developed his punchy speaking style. Encouraged to enter the free-for-all forum of the public square, he quickly became a favorite of the masses. He soon learned what people listened to. And he used everything he had learned in the streets when he stepped into the pulpit to deliver a sermon.

No sooner had he moved to Worcester than he was asked to preach to two thousand young army recruits each Sunday morning. In his freewheeling, colloquial, staccato style, he held them spellbound. His contact with the recruits convinced him that he should be in the front lines ministering to the men.

He entered the army as a chaplain and demanded to be sent to the front lines. He wanted to be wherever the action was. His outlook was revealed in his advice to another chaplain:

Live with the men, go where they go; make up your mind that you will share all their risks, and more, if you can do any good. You can take it that the best place for a padre . . . is where there is most danger of death. Our first job is to go beyond the men in self-sacrifice and reckless devotion. . . . There is very little spiritual work—it is all muddled and mixed—but it is all spiritual. Take a

box of fags in your haversack, and a great deal of love in your heart, and go up to them, live with them, talk with them. You can pray *with* them sometimes, but pray *for* them always.¹

More than anything in his life, the war molded his career. He entered the army with the spirit of a cavalier, but what he encountered broke his heart. At the beginning he felt the war was justified. At its close he determined that no war could be good and he dedicated himself to pacifism. He had done his duty; in fact, he had done far more than his duty. In 1917 the government of Great Britain awarded him the Military Cross for bravery in helping the wounded. Yet he came to feel that doing his duty demanded more than helping men die in war. It called for him to see that there would be no more wars in which men would be called to die.

The poverty which had surrounded his youth and early parish service, along with his experiences of the horrors of war, darkened Studdert Kennedy's preaching with the blackness of tragedy. He emphasized the God who suffered; he stressed the Cross more than the Resurrection. In spite of his bursts of laughter, frequent practical jokes, wisecracks, and funny stories, his life and sermons lacked something of the sunshine of hope.

After the war he joined another army—the growing army of men and women dedicated to rooting out social injustice in England. He threw himself into the task with a fury. As a messenger for the Industrial Christian Fellowship he roved across England speaking to huge meetings. He applied the teachings of Jesus Christ to such social issues as war, poverty, industrialism, politics, and marital breakdown.

His earliest social concern was the plight of the poor. He had seen what the bleak industrial environment could do to human life. He had seen men's spirits broken by poverty and injustice. He knew what it was like to live constantly in the black night of economic despair. He could not keep silent; his prophetic voice rang out again and again against the cruelty and injustice of the economic system in Great Britain.

Yet he never believed that men's lives could be totally salvaged

1. J. K. Mozley, ed., *G. A. Studdert Kennedy by His Friends* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1929), pp. 139–41.

by adjusting an economic system. He realized that malformed human personality rested at the root of the trouble. He cared about man's relation to God, because he knew that if that relation were right, it would create a new man who was concerned about an old and corrupt order. He attacked churchmen who used pious fronts as excuses for doing nothing about poverty. In a blistering paragraph in his book entitled *Lies!* he declared:

There is one class of people who make me feel as that old lady felt [a desire to strangle] and that is the class who meet all plans to abolish poverty with a superior smile, and the words, "Impossible," "Human Nature," and, finally, "The poor shall always be with you."

There is more real blasphemy in those words than in the most lurid Sergeant's speech that ever turned the air of Flanders blue. It is sheer blank atheism. It would make Christ blaze at its dishonest stupidity, as it makes the ordinary man in the street swear.²

He also rebuked the institutional church for its part in the poverty of England. He warned that the masses would revolt from a church "which damned souls to build churches, sweated work-people to endow charities, and manufactured prostitutes by low wages to build rescue homes for fallen women and buy a peerage."³

Studdert Kennedy's concern for the poor ran deeper than mere words; he took a personal interest in the poor. He seemed drawn to them. He went among them not out of a sense of duty, but because he desired to do so. He really *cared* for the tattered, downtrodden wretches crowded into teeming slums, cared as few men have cared. Once when he found an old invalid trying to rest on a hard couch, he fetched a pillow and sheets, and ultimately a whole bedstead, which he carried through the streets himself. He wandered in and out of the flophouses and bars. Wherever he went he brought compassion and encouragement. He comforted the dying, cheered the hopeless to look forward to a better day, and tried to encourage the drunks to a better way. The people loved him.

Often an indication of a man's true concern is where he puts

2. G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *Lies!* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), p. 42.

3. Horton Davies, *Varieties of English Preaching, 1900-1960* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 113. Used by permission.

his money. Studdert Kennedy put his money with the poor. He gave it away with such utter abandon that his friends often feared for his own bankruptcy. He gave all the proceeds from one of his enormously successful books to the St. Dunstan's Fund, a fund for the blind.

Studdert Kennedy was no shallow popularizer of a social gospel; he grasped too clearly the depth of man's sin to be dragged into any false optimism. And he was too serious to be content with froth in his speeches. He read and studied about economic forces and conditions. Later, as he shifted his intellectual interest from economics to psychology, he studied deeply again. His interests were broad. He devoted sermons, books, and poems to such issues as the nature of the church, the claims of Christ, the church and the world, labor-management relations, class struggles, poverty, political corruption, war, sex, narcotics, and a multitude of similar subjects.

His hard-hitting approach gained him many enemies: some disliked him because they misunderstood him; others disliked him because they understood all too clearly what he was saying. But those who knew him best never doubted his sincerity and his utter unselfishness. The following account by William Temple is a description of Studdert Kennedy's approach and personality, and also a tribute to the selfless ministry of "Woodbine Willie":

I distrusted what then seemed to me an affected violence of language; he appeared to rejoice in administering shocks to respectability for the mere fun of doing it. In other words, I thought of him as a conscious poser. It is hard now to believe; but the fact is so. I was already fascinated by his brilliance, nearly always in agreement with his argument, greatly impressed by his intellectual grasp of his subject; yet I wished he would not say things just as he did. Then I made his acquaintance.

My wife and I were the guests of the Headmaster of the King's School at Worcester, and he was to meet us at dinner. He arrived very late, and we had begun the meal. He sat down, very hot and rather breathless, and talked without a pause for about twenty minutes. Then he abruptly fell silent, and scarcely uttered another syllable for a period almost as long. He had arrived keyed up by the effort of hurrying; talked continuously and delightfully so long as the impulse moved that way;

when it was expended, he ceased till it stirred again. There was a convincing sense of utter unself-consciousness. It was the exact opposite of all that I had expected. Neither speech nor silence was for effect. He was not thinking about himself at all. He did not know he was there. Self played no part.⁴

He gave himself so unselfishly to the tasks of relating the message of Christ to the hurt of the world that he pushed himself toward an early grave. Never healthy, his body was racked by the pains and disability of asthma. Yet he refused to slow down. Then, in 1929, shortly before his forty-sixth birthday, he died of influenza. In a whirlwind of activity he had packed more into his brief life than most men do in a full life span.

Kenneth Mozley, canon of St. Paul's Cathedral and a long-time friend of Studdert Kennedy, summed up his approach to life:

He aroused enthusiasm but never through courting the breeze of popular favor. He aroused opposition and refused to modify his message to avoid it. He was brave enough to try to tell all sorts and conditions of men the truth as he saw it. And, finally, he combined in a most remarkable manner a very vivid and rich personality with an absence of that self-centeredness. . . . He was not busy with himself, but with the work which he had to do. His entire lack of self-consciousness was, if expressed positively, just that simplicity of nature which leaves no room for the obtrusion of self.

When, at the end of one of the most impressive addresses I ever heard, at a great meeting in the Albert Hall, he knelt down on the platform, he did so because at the moment to kneel down and pray was the one thing natural for him. Out of the full stores of his personality came his laughter and tears, that blending of humor and pathos which only an Irishman can achieve, his love of talk, his incalculable whimsicalities: but they came unattended by that spirit of self which spoils the fineness of the gold.⁵

4. Leonard Cutts, ed., *The Best of G. A. Studdert Kennedy: Selected from His Writings by a Friend* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1947), p. 16. Used by permission.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 237-38.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Harry Emerson Fosdick has been called the "father of modern preaching"; if that is true, then G. A. Studdert Kennedy must be the father of contemporary preaching. The sermons of Fosdick are relevant answers to real problems, illustrated with the best in literature and modern thought and expressed in the finest prose. The sermons of Studdert Kennedy are impressionistic, abrupt, shocking, intensely emotional, sometimes racked with anguish, sometimes stubbornly tenacious, sometimes exploding with fiery vision. There are no other sermons in the Christian tradition quite like those of Studdert Kennedy.

Ernest Jeffs tells of his first encounter with this small, slim-figured man with bat-wing ears and a mouth that seemed overlarge for its surroundings:

"Woodbine Willie" entered his church in full processional pomp, clad in a gorgeous vestment and preceded by scarlet acolytes. His function for the next hour was in the most literal sense "the service of the altar". . . .

In the midst of all this Anglo-Catholic ritual Mr. Studdert Kennedy advanced to the altar rail and made a simple, homely appeal for some diocesan fund. Then there was a reference to a poignant tragedy of the past week—the loss of a submarine with her crew—leading up to some pregnant remarks on Fear in its relation to the war spirit. It was fully five minutes before I realized that Mr. Kennedy was preaching his morning sermon.⁶

Studdert Kennedy was so natural and casual in his manner of preaching, so much a part of the congregation, that his sermons seemed unstudied examples of natural rhetoric. Nothing could have been further from the truth:

To most who heard him his speaking appeared to be brilliantly extempore. In fact, it was nothing of the sort. Meticulous preparation backed by a powerful memory was of the essence of it. He once said he "dared leave nothing to chance." Most of his set-piece orations were committed entirely to memory so thoroughly that he

6. Ernest H. Jeffs, *Princes of the Modern Pulpit in England* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, n.d.), p. 152. Used by permission.

could, and frequently did, transpose whole sections verbatim.⁷

All of his preparation did nothing to make his sermons more orthodox. He seldom used a scriptural text, at least not in the usual sense of the term:

I have for some time now, whether in sermons or lectures, abandoned the practice of preaching from a text, partly because I believe that a text divorced from its context is often an enemy of truth, and partly because I found by experience that when I began in the ordinary conventional way, saying that in the tenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel and the fourth verse, you find these words, people had a tendency to compose themselves as for long and uninterrupted slumber.⁸

Most of his sermons do involve the use of Scripture; *The Word and the Work* is composed of sermons on the prologue to John's Gospel, and *The Wicket Gate* is an interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. He did not ever begin his sermons with scriptural quotations, but all of his sermons involve scriptural themes or passages somewhere in them, and most of his sermons quote a passage of Scripture before they are finished.

Obviously this method of using Scripture does not lend itself to exegesis or exposition. He rarely used historical Bible settings or biblical background details. Nor did he emphasize biblical phrases or terms. One of the only places where Studdert Kennedy showed anything of this kind of biblical study was in the first sermon of *The Word and the Work*:

The opening phrase "In the beginning," carries our minds not merely back to the beginning of time, but beyond time and space altogether. It lifts us above things to the ultimate meaning and value of things. It would be better to translate it: "Right at the heart of the ultimate reality," or "At the back of everything."

The word "was" is also timeless, implying a mode of existence without beginning and without end, and we could best render it by the phrase: "Was in the be-

7. William Purcell, *Woodbine Willie* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1962), p. 196.

8. G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *The Wicket Gate* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1928), p. 153.

ginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end," by which we strive to express eternity. . . . Thus if we translate the five Greek words as "*Right at the heart of the ultimate reality there was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end, a Person expressing a rational purpose which men can in some measure understand,*" we get nearer to the meaning of the words, even though it sounds cumbrous and queer.⁹

In the next paragraph he stated his proposition—something else he did not often do: "The world and the life of men in the world have a meaning and a purpose."¹⁰

The development of most of Studdert Kennedy's sermons follows the "jewel," or one-point technique. Many begin with a series of questions, poetic musings, or blunt arguments which set forth his theme. Once his idea was stated, he usually examined it from several points of view. Because he was preoccupied with the vexing questions of his day, he usually followed a problem-solution approach to the sermon. Few of his sermons show two- or three-point development. One of the few sermons with a discernible outline is his sermon "Our Father":

- I. The first of our necessary certainties is the certainty of self.
- II. The second is the certainty of the other self.
- III. The third great certainty is the certainty of nature.
- IV. The fourth certainty is the certainty of death.

In some of his books no titles were given to the sermons: *The Word and the Work*, a book of sermons on the prologue of John, has no titles. In *Food for the Fed-up*, sermons on the Apostles' Creed, Studdert Kennedy employed words or phrases from the creed for titles: "I believe in God the Father," etc. In *The Wicket Gate* the titles of the sermons are phrases from the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father," "Which art in heaven." *The Hardest Part*, sermons on belief in God, does use titles: "What Is God Like?" "God and Nature," "God in the Bible." More imaginative titles are given in *The New Man in Christ*: "Treasure upon Earth," "If There Had Been No Christmas," "God

9. G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *The Word and the Work* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1965), p. 9. Used by permission.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Save the King." His best titles are found in *Rough Talks by a Padre*: "What the _____ Is the Church Doing Here?" "What Are We Fighting For?" "Shall Our Dead Have Died in Vain?" "Why Aren't All the Best Chaps Christians?"

His sermon introductions show great variety in style. Humor was one of his favorite ways to begin. In "Lies and the Life Eternal," he began: "If I am a monkey I am a dismally discontented monkey."¹¹ Many of his sermons begin with questions. "He Ascended into Heaven" begins with a series of sixteen questions: "Did he? Where is heaven? What is it? Is it a place?" The last of these questions are especially pointed: "Here are two distinct questions. Did it happen? And what difference does it make if it did?"¹² The sermon then follows two-point development, beginning with the transition, "Let us get down to the first. Did it happen? Did he ascend?"

Studdert Kennedy quoted extensively, particularly poems. Some of his introductions use literature, although poetry is usually saved for the conclusion. In the introduction to the sermon "Plain Bread," he began by quoting a passage from *Pilgrim's Progress*. More of his opening illustrations came from personal experiences, either from his boyhood or his army life. The sermon "Thy Kingdom Come" from *The Wicket Gate* begins with a personal experience: "Not long ago, looking through some old books, I came across a series of lessons for Sunday School children. . . ."¹³

His conclusions are never summaries. Studdert Kennedy's sermons build toward an emotional climax. Since he usually followed a one-point, impressionistic development, it is often hard to tell where the body of the sermon ends and the conclusion begins. It might be more accurate to say that his sermons have *endings* rather than *conclusions*; but the term doesn't matter—whatever they are, few men ever stopped a sermon with greater force than Studdert Kennedy. Imagine listening to this conclusion from "Lies and the Love of God":

When Venus calls us as the shadows fall to easy
heaven and certain peace, when the hoarse and blood-

11. G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *Lies!* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1919), p. 215.

12. G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *Food for the Fed-up* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1921), pp. 270-72.

13. Studdert Kennedy, *The Wicket Gate*, p. 96.

choked voice of Mars rings out across the world and calls the nations out to war, when Bacchus stands and offers us the red wine of forgetfulness – what can save us? What can save the ordinary man from damning his soul and destroying his world? The piping of professors? The books of the philosophers? The knowledge of the scientists? Vague goodwill and goodnature? You cold-blooded saints of the study, have you ever walked in the streets? Have you ever lived? Only a passion can conquer a passion – we must have God.¹⁴

Even stronger is this ending from his sermon “In the Beginning Was the Word”:

Can you hear that voice and still believe in God? Still believe that in the beginning was the *word*? Then you have got the Truth, go out and tell it, go and live it, go out and suffer for it; that is the will of Christ. But if your altar is a refuge, if you put your fingers in your ears, to shut that awful voice outside; if you have built a private sanctuary for the comfort of your little soul, then look out! It is going to blow it all away, and you may cry after it with many tears, but it will not come again. It is a nasty mean little place, and the wrath of God’s Love will burn and burn and burn it until there are not even left the ashes of regret.¹⁵

Studdert Kennedy was a master of style. He used shocking statements and imaginative poetry to capture the imagination of his audience. His preaching represents a genuine breakthrough in the art of communication. Sometimes his words soar with eloquence; at times they thunder with wrath and social passion. His vocabulary could paint a sunset more beautiful than any Turner ever imagined. There is a quickness and urgency about his style, an irrepressible zeal that cannot be boring, whatever else it is.

The sermons of Studdert Kennedy are like the paintings of Picasso: it is useless to describe them – they must be seen to be believed. A few excerpts from his sermons may give some idea at least of his mastery of countless stylistic devices:

14. Studdert Kennedy, *Lies!* (Hodder & Stoughton), p. 131.

15. Studdert Kennedy, *The Word and the Work*, p. 19.

Simile:

"They murder the gospel message with the same conscientious stupidity that a schoolgirl murders Beethoven's sonatas" (*The Wicket Gate*, p. 104).

"This calling of the Creator by a pet name is like trying to domesticate Mount Everest" (*The Wicket Gate*, p. 78).

"It is a face as ugly as sin and as beautiful as an angel, as cruel as the sea and as tender as a woman. It is a world of stars and snakes, of violence and vermin, of laughter and tears, of peace and pain, of joy and sorrow, a world of contradiction" (*Food for the Fed-up*, p. 72).

Metaphor:

"Earth is the twilight between the night of hell and the sunshine of heaven . . ." (*The Wicket Gate*, p. 76).

Epigram:

"It turns the Chalice into a hypodermic squirt. It turns the Cup of Remembrance into an opium pipe" (*Lies!* p. 234).

"To manufacture a heaven of our own is the quickest road to hell" (*The Wicket Gate*, p. 67).

"You cannot get rid of religion by denying God, any more than you can get rid of sex by refusing to marry" (*Word and Work*, p. 51).

Alliteration:

"Cows don't go crazy about chewing their cud, nor monkeys about cracking nuts or climbing trees; but there is hardly anything from the Love of God to gambling and gold about which men do not tend to go crazy" (*Word and Work*, p. 50).

Repetition:

"He hangs there on His cosmic Cross, terrible as an army with banners, because he bleeds, bleeds in the slums, and in the unemployed, bleeds in the little children crammed into the mills of India, China, and Japan, bleeds in the subject races made into instruments of gain, bleeds in the memory of our glorious dead . . ." (*Word and Work*, p. 91).

Humor:

"One man can produce music that would bring tears to the eyes of an ostrich, and another doesn't know the difference

between 'God Save the King' and 'Pop Goes the Weasel.' I have got a fist like a baby, and my brother has one like a leg of mutton. It is absurd. Men and women are the most unequal things God ever made. That is just the fun of them" (*Lies!* p. 70-71).

Force:

"A man lives a life of quite ordinary immorality, not any more nor not any less animal than that of the set in which he moves; he lives as his companions live; and then one day he gathers up into his arms a little baby born blind, and knows that he struck out its eyes, and he stands revealed to himself for what he is—a dirty, foul-minded blackguard. Out of the sightless eyes of his own child Christ stares and cries, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My little ones, ye have done it unto Me.' It is his judgment day" (*Food for the Fed-up*, pp. 308-9).

Studdert Kennedy was a master with words. In one group of two hundred seven words examined, one hundred forty-eight were one-syllable words; thirty-seven were two-syllable; sixteen, three-syllable; two were four-syllable; and only four were five-syllable. None of the four- or five-syllable words was unfamiliar. He emphasized specific, concrete, bold words.

His preaching was anything but impersonal; he consistently employed the first and second person pronouns. In one two-page excerpt studied, he used the first person singular twenty-five times, first person plural eight times, and second person eight times. Nevertheless, no amount of counting and analyzing can explain a preacher like Studdert Kennedy.

His sermons seem to suggest secrets for preaching to a secular-minded, nontheological world. But every attempt to understand those secrets is frustrating; every explanation seems unsatisfying and incomplete. The sermons of Studdert Kennedy deserve further study by students and preachers.

Sermons

BEWARE OF CHRIST!

"From the beginning of history the stronger peoples have exploited the weaker ones, invading their territories and either exterminating them or reducing them to the position of serfs or of slaves; and they have done this without any qualms or scruples of conscience. We may take it as a mark of progress that the stronger can no longer exploit the weaker without protest, and that the welfare of the weaker peoples has become a matter of public concern and debate."

THOSE WORDS begin a chapter in a very remarkable and well-thought-out book, lately published, upon the relation of Christianity to the race-problem in the world. We may take it, the author says, as a mark of progress that the stronger peoples can no longer invade and exploit the weaker peoples without any scruples of conscience. Well, can we? Is it a mark of progress that to-day the feeling in our hearts is not a feeling of elation and triumph, as over a great victory, but a feeling of serious deep wonder as to whether such a ghastly thing as came in 1914 will come again upon the earth? Is it a mark of progress that we cannot look back upon that as a glorious triumph of our country over our enemies, but must look back on it as a great world disaster which we pray earnestly may never come again? Is it a mark of progress that in my own mind, and I believe in the minds of many of you, there has come a change over the spirit of that immortal cartoon which Punch published at the time of the burial of the Unknown Warrior? You remember that the artist depicted at the door of Westminster Abbey the angel figure of our nation standing, and to him there came a British Tommy, with a pack on his back, and that wretched old tin hat on the side of his head, and he was challenged by the angel of our land: "Halt! Who goes there?" And the answer: "I have no name. I died for my country." And the angel answered, "Pass! All's well, Unknown Warrior."

Well, for me the answer that the Unknown Warrior would give to-

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day would be something different. When he was challenged with, "Halt! Who goes there?" he would say, "I have no name, I have no country. I am a man who died for the peace of the world." For me it is impossible, when I think of the unknown warriors, to separate the dead of my enemies, as they were, from my own beloved dead; and I think that feeling grows in the hearts of all men as we look back upon those battlefields. All the dead—German, Russian, Austrian, British—are one band of men who suffered agonies for the peace of the world. Is that feeling that grows among us progress? Is it progress that we cannot triumph as our forefathers would have done over our enemies, but a solemn and deeper feeling comes into our hearts? Is it progress? Or does it mean that the white man is losing his nerve and his power of strong government?

The Dean of St. Paul's has called the European man the fiercest of the beasts of prey, who is not likely to abandon the weapons of destruction that have made him the lord and bully of the planet. We ask ourselves, Ought we to abandon them? Ought we to abandon our weapons of destruction, or is it not rather our destiny to use them, and to use them with a strong unfaltering hand, not striking where it is not necessary, but when it is necessary striking and striking hard; striking to kill and not merely to wound? When we strike to wound the weaker men we only rouse them to fury and necessitate a sterner death blow later on. And we may think to ourselves, is not that just what we are tempted to do to-day? Everywhere, at home and abroad, we are wavering. We are not striking with the same concentrated and untroubled force that our forefathers struck. Just when we are going to assert ourselves, when the strong man is going to assert his right to keep order and to keep the weak in their places, it is as though someone came and touched him on the shoulder, and said, Is it right? Is it just? Ought you to do it?

It presents a terrible and appalling problem and a great danger when we remember that we are outnumbered by double by the colored races, and that they are being equipped with our civilization and armed with our arms, and that there burns among them the feeling of resentment at the way they have been subjected in the past. It is a terrible thing for us to have to face—to ask ourselves whether we can or whether we ought to abandon our weapons of destruction at all, or whether we are bound to use them, and use them in the future with a strong and unwavering hand. If we give way to these ideas of universal justice and reason and a universal unity among men, should we not steer for a great cosmic crash; will not the result be anarchy, an uprising all over the world? Does it not mean that we are shirking our real burden, the strong man's burden, which is to rule, and keep order, and prevent anarchy? Is not that really what it means if we are tempted to abandon the strength and the power and the ability to slaughter that God has put into our hands? We might think to ourselves: Daniel in the lion's

den may have been all right, but I am not Daniel, and this is a lion's den; somebody shut the lions' mouths for Daniel, but you give me a machine gun! The whole thing depends upon the facts. If this is a lions' den and the laws of the jungle are the laws of human life, then, for God's sake, let us take the machine guns and use them! It is a question of fact; it all depends upon what is true and what is false; and if this world is, as it looks on the surface to be, a lions' den, inhabited by animals who are ruled by the same laws as the animal world is ruled by, and the law of whose life is struggle and strife and the survival of the strong, then any attempt at disarmament, however slow, however cautious, is madness. What we have to do is to buckle our armour on tighter than ever, and stand to.

It is a question of facts as to what the world actually is, and whose world it is; and it is on your belief about the facts that you have got to make your venture. If you believe that there is no God of justice and no God of love, and that this world is just the result of a series of accidents, and that the laws which govern our lives are the laws which govern animal lives, then you ought to oppose, tooth and nail, with all your might and with all your main, any idea of making peace. If this world is made for war, you will be mad if you try to get peace. It all depends in the end on whether Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God or a megalomaniac. If what he said was madness, and it was either that or the highest sanity; if he did not reveal the truth about God's world; if he was not right when he said that this world was a family and that the laws which govern it were the laws of the family; if Christianity is merely an ideal and not a truth—then Christ ought to be crucified quick as a public nuisance and an underminer of public order, because he is taking the strength from the strong.

We are not comfortable about it now. Our strong men are not nearly as comfortable when they are doing murder and doing injustice as they used to be.

They are getting weak. There are thousands of people who pray for a strong man who would not have the nerve to follow him if he came. They dare not. If the strong-man policy was to be pursued, it would be that the white man would have to wade through seas of blood to get his way; and you are not strong enough to do it. Christ has got hold of you. You may deny it; you may never go to church; you distrust parsons and churches; but he has got hold of you. Through the centuries he has got hold of you, and the thing your fathers triumphed in and gloried in he is making you hate in your soul. He has got hold of your innards, and you are weakening. You are not as good murderers and robbers as they used to be—not nearly.

Does that mean you are going down or you are going up? Does that mean that you have not got the nerve and force of your fathers, and that you are getting effete and decadent? Or does it mean that you are going up and becoming a better and nobler people? That depends upon

whether this world is God's world, or whether it is just the result of a series of accidents. It is a matter of your ultimate faith; and it is nonsense for you to suppose that Christianity is a thing that does not matter. It is either the highest truth or it is a dangerous public nuisance; and either you ought to listen to what I say, or you ought to shut me up quick, because I go round the country talking things that are calculated to weaken strong men, and make them ask whether they have the right to do as they please. Either you ought to shut me up quick, or else you ought to pay some attention to what I say in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Anything is better than wobbling. People say that we can drift into peace. You will neither drift into peace nor into victory; you will drift into hell.

If we are going to make peace then we must pursue peace with the same tremendous earnestness, with the same steadfastness of purpose, with the same unconquerable hope and faith that we pursued victory in the war. We cannot drift into peace; it is going to be the most tremendous and supreme effort of the human race; and if you just let things slide, act neither upon one faith nor upon the other, pursue a policy of pinpricks, because you do not know how to wield a sword, and you dare not walk without one—if you wobble and waver through the world you will come to disaster. Either you must make justice and reason the basis of your entire constitution all over the world, seeking justice for the black man as for the white man, and appealing to reason and appealing to what is right; or, for God's sake, buckle on your sword, and use it as your fathers did without wavering.

But if you do that, beware of Christ. Because his power is bigger than you think. He has got hold of all sorts of people who never name his name. He has got right into the hearts of the civilised peoples of the world, and his laws and his dream hang around them. There are thousands who curse us parsons, but they curse us because we are not Christian enough. Lots of men who never bow the knee to him—he has gotten hold of them, and he is weakening them, undermining their primitive power, undermining their savage force, and making them dream dreams of justice and the hope of a better world. It is a fatal dream unless God means it. If God does not mean that this world should become a finer and nobler place, that men should be built up into some sort of brotherhood resting ultimately upon justice, then it is a fatal and deadly thing to try—it is only one of these ideals.

I believe that Jesus is right. But I am frightened, and I think the man who is not frightened is either a hero or a fool. Don't run away with the idea, because I say it is a great thing that can and must be done, that I am not frightened at the risks. You cannot have peace as Christ wills it without running risks, and I am frightened at the risks. Yet I am more frightened at what will happen if we do not obey Christ. I believe that Christ was right, that God is our Father, that we are his children, and that men can be made into a unity resting upon justice

and upon right. And in that task the English speaking peoples must lead the way. But it is going to be a dangerous business, and a business that demands every power we possess. It is not merely that we must be as good as our forefathers: we must be ten times better, and our children better than we, if we are to bear and carry through this great task. I bid you pray with me that we may be brave enough, reckless enough, gallant enough, to seek peace, and to run the perils that we must be exposed to if we are to find it. It is not a task that is finished yet or is likely to be finished in our time, but it is a task that our children's children will see accomplished if we follow it with a single purpose and with a high and a gallant heart.

“LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL”

Matthew 6:13

AS WE UTTER the familiar words with which the great prayer closes, many of us, if we begin to think of them, become conscious of a difficulty about their meaning. Does God lead us into temptation? Are we to suppose that God tempts us? and, if He does, must it not be for our good, and ought we to ask Him not to do so? So long as He leads us, ought we not rather to defy temptation? If we are to be sin-bearers, ought we not to seek out conflict with sin? Ought we not to challenge and conquer, secure in His protection? and ought we not to be able, in the power of His Grace, to make some bolder prayer than this cry for “safety first”? But there is no real difficulty. We are still in the Garden of Gethsemane. That is where we ought to be. The prayer is the exact parallel to His prayer, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt.” “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” There is in both those cries, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” and “Lead us not into temptation,” the same loathing of sin, the same shrinking of the

Reprinted with permission from *The Wicket Gate or Plain Bread* by G. A. Studdert Kennedy (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923), pp. 212-30.

soul from all contact with it, the same spiritual repulsion from its ugliness and dirt. In both prayers, the reality and urgency of stress is upon the last part—"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," and "Deliver us from evil." Men have misunderstood the prayer in the Garden, and have made the tremendous aspiration, "Not as I will but as Thou wilt," into an act of pure submission, interpreting the Will of God as the Cross. But we must once more think clear and straight about God's Will. God did not and could not will the Cross. He did not and could not will the awful tragedy of Calvary, which summed up in itself all the loathsome degradation of which humanity is capable, and all the ugliness of sin. God could not and did not will the Cross; but He did and could will the Christ Who bore it. It is in the Christ, not in the Cross, that we see God's Will revealed. God was leading the Christ into temptation, He was bringing Him into contact with evil, once more He was being driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and the Spirit that drives is the Spirit of Love—the love which makes Him one with the men who betray, forsake, mock, spit upon and scourge Him, degrading and disgracing human nature. The Spirit of Love made their sin His sin, and their disgrace His disgrace, because it made Him one with them.

We have seen that sin is always at its root a break in the unity of man with God, and it was to that root of all sin that the Son of Man was tempted in the Garden. As the flesh and humanity of Jesus shrank back from the horror of sin-bearing, there rose up before Him the possibility of what He knew must never, never be—a break between Him and the Father. Always, throughout His whole life, that possibility had been there for Him—as it is for us—sometimes so far away as to appear non-existent, sometimes so near as to be almost a reality. Now it is very near, so near that it has to be met and overcome. He is preparing His Soul for that ghastly Three Hours struggle in the silence and the dark, at the end of which, and not until the end, He looked up, as the sun broke through the clouds dispersing the gloom, and said, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?" It was the agony of possible separation that He shrank from and prayed against. It was the possibility of that rift which caused Him to be sore amazed and very heavy. The first part of the prayer is, in a sense, not so much a prayer as an expression of what He must pray against—that which has to be overcome—that loathing of contact with evil which is characteristic of the soul redeemed. It is always there in the perfect soul—and must always be overcome. It is not for nothing that God sets out two great commandments and not merely one—first, that the soul redeemed must love God with all its being, and, secondly, that it must love man. For there is a real temptation, in many ways the most tragic and terrible temptation of all, which comes to those who love God, who really love the good, the beautiful, and the true—the temptation to shrink from the ordinary carnal, sensual, greedy, cruel man, to

shrink from contact with the world, and to shirk the distinct call to bear its sin. It is that temptation which Christ had to meet in the Garden; and it is that temptation which we have to meet every day, by the same power, and with practically the same prayer on our lips.

God does lead us into this temptation every day; and we must follow. He calls us to the Cross every day, and we must bear it. But just in proportion as we live for Him, and with Him, and have found in His Presence the fulness of joy, and at His right Hand pleasure for evermore, and therefore know the glory of life, and perceive how much we stand to lose through sin, and how much there is at stake in our manhood—just in proportion as we have the fulness of God's Grace, we shall be reluctant to court temptation, and afraid to meet it carelessly. The brave man is no fool. It is the boy who has never been in a battle, who goes to it lightly and with a careless heart. It is the hero of many fights and many victories, who goes to it with caution, with eyes wide open to the danger that he runs; conscious that he stands not for himself alone, but for the men who follow on, who follow and march with him, for whom he is responsible. The nearer we live to God, the more we shall hate and detest the very shadow of evil; and the more it will be to us the shadow of the Cross, the more we shall pray, "Lead us not into temptation"—though never, of course, without the supreme act of aspiration which is the real prayer, "If in course of duty, O God, temptation comes, then, deliver us from evil."

We have got into the way of calling all our misfortunes, disappointments, and even minor sorrows, "crosses"; but it is not a good habit, because it blinds our eyes to the real meaning of the Cross, and of suffering with Christ. We believe it to be true that there is no suffering, nobly borne, which does not, in some measure, help to lift the world; but the real suffering with Christ is the suffering for the sins of the world, of the man, who loves God and loves mankind. And in order to be even conscious of that cross as a cross, we have to live near the Christ; we have to desire for men what He desired for them, and to see in men what He saw in them. We have to receive and accept that love of God shed abroad in our hearts, which makes us so love ordinary men, that we feel to any man who is a drunkard what we should feel toward our own sons if they were drunkards; that we feel to every woman who is a prostitute, what we should feel to our own daughters, whom as children we took upon our knees in the beauty of their innocence, if they were prostitutes. We have to feel toward the man who is covetous and a lover of money, what we should feel toward a son of our own who turned, from the high ideals of human service, and the splendour of self-sacrifice, which we held up to him in his boyhood, to some mean, cowardly and cruel form of money-grabbing. That is the real cross. It is a misfortune if a man's son dies, and if he bears that nobly, he helps to lift the world; but it is a cross if the man's son

sins, and he, by loving, saves him; and the finer and the whiter the man is, the more terrible that cross will be, and the more terrible the temptation it will carry with it, the temptation to turn either from God or Man. The white man hates sin, because it stinks, even when it is drenched with expensive perfumes, and clothed in silks and satins. If it be refined and disguised by letters and by learning, in such a way as to deceive any but the very elect, still the white man recognises it, and hates it, because it stinks.

And so, the nearer we get to God, the more earnestly we shall cry, "Lead us not into temptation."

In these days, we live in a state of radical and wholesale reaction against what we call Victorian hypocrisy and pretence. We pride ourselves on our superiority. We are realists, not idealists. We desire to face the facts. There is no use in pretending that the world is different from what it is, we say; better to live in hell than in a fool's paradise. And so we have grown reckless about temptation. To the pure all things are pure, we say; and we proceed to go anywhere, read everything, look at anything, and fear nothing. We entirely agree with St. James that "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," for we are nothing if not philanthropic; but as to keeping ourselves "unspotted from the world," our hold on that is very slender. It is an ideal, and nothing more. We scoff at the timidity of a religion which bids us remember that we have a soul to save, and that we must preserve ourselves from taint. We are brave, indeed; but it is very doubtful whether we are wise. If our Victorian fathers were hypocrites and unconscious fools, it is doubtful if we are very much better. The pendulum has swung back, but it is the same old clock, and we have not really changed. In some ways we are bigger hypocrites and bigger fools than our Victorian fathers, and doubly self-deceived, because we know, or ought to know, more of the dangers that we run. All the knowledge which we now possess, of the power of suggestion, and the supremacy of the imagination in the spiritual life, ought to warn us that reckless realism is the high road to lunacy; it ought to warn us, but it does not seem to do so.

Modern realism is a highly-paid profession. Our realists not only face facts, they manufacture them. They not only see dirt, they are actually dirty. They paint the world black with the filth they find in their own souls. It is the realism of second-rate art which, because it has neither the skill nor the technique to touch the finer chords of human nature and awaken their music into life, makes a frank appeal to the crude animal instincts. These instincts are always there, and can always be relied upon to give a certain thrill, posing as that sting of poignant pleasure or of piercing pain, with which, in the hand of the true artist, real beauty whips to life our human souls. It is always the

line of least resistance for the artist to appeal to some strong primitive instinct, and so make sure of a response. The true mission of the artist, which is to educate and control public taste, and not merely to follow and pander to it, is an arduous and thankless one, and not profitable from the commercial point of view. There is therefore a tremendous temptation to prostitute his art whatever it be, and be content with a crude sensationalism. It pays – and the artist must live.

It is to this temptation that many of our modern realists have, consciously or unconsciously, submitted. It is partly, no doubt, the result of the war, which was a throw-back to barbarism; for in that barbarism we openly rejoiced. This is real life, we said, life with a capital L. This is life without the varnish, human nature as it truly is. Take away the artificialities of civilisation, and this is what men are. We had a lot of realistic books, telling us the truth about life, and casting all reserve to the winds. Needless to say, it was all self-deception and nonsense, modern war being the most damnably artificial condition into which men could be put – cut off from their womankind, herded together in great droves like cattle, pelted with tons of iron, living half their time like rabbits in funk-holes, in constant terror of their lives, or going down to the Base for a period of perpetual boredom, during which they were hunted round the streets by hysterical or avaricious women. Our realists tried to convince us that this was “honest” life. And they wrote splendid “honest” books about it, what publishers call courageous and outspoken books, giving daring revelations of the truth; and the theory is, that because to the pure all things are pure, therefore we can read them, and it will do us no harm. Of all the balderdash and barefaced hypocrisy that has ever been propagated in the name of truth, that probably is the worst. To suppose you can souse yourself in sensuality, sentimentality, and the general atmosphere of the woman on the streets for hours at a time, and come out unscathed, has got less foundation than most of the other baseless lies upon which we live. If the truth about life were what it is portrayed to be, in our realist fiction, and realist press – then, all that Jesus taught is a tissue of lies; and on the whole I prefer Jesus Christ to the greatest modern realist alive. As Mr. Alfred Noyes has said, “In the name of ‘reality’ many writers are indulging in shabby forms of make-believe, and are reducing all reality to ashes.”

This poet parasite of grief
Lives on the falling, leaf by leaf,
Of life's illusion, glad to see
The nakedness of misery.
He probes his pen deep down within,
To make a sonnet of a sin.
A Realist, revealing less
Life's beauty than its bitterness.

Yet purer eyes than his have seen
Truth in these fields of living green,
And truer hearts than his have trod
White ways of wonder up to God.
Lord, touch my lips that I may sing
The music of men's hallowing.
Touch Thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe.

It is perfectly true that to the pure all things are pure, but you have to be extremely certain of your purity, and which of us is? Not I. "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips," and I have jolly well got to take care; and if you have got any sense, friend reader, so have you. You may suppose that what you read and see flows off your mentality like water off a duck's back; but it does not, it sticks; and therefore, if you are wise, you will still be sufficient of a Victorian and a Christian to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," as well as "Deliver us from evil."

Yet you have got to meet temptation, mind you. Unfortunately, in this world, you do not need to seek dirt to find it; you get it chucked at you, chucked at you as you walk right straight along the path of righteousness. And if it be really true that you cannot touch pitch without being defiled, you have got to risk defilement; for love will not let you escape touching pitch. But let us be clear about this. Temptation is not sin. Being attacked is not being defeated; and God, Who leads us into temptation, can and will deliver us from evil. *Only we must stick to God.* We must stick to prayer, to worship, and to communion. We must strive to keep ourselves so, that when the prince of this world comes, and calls us to the mean, the double-faced, and the unclean, he shall find nothing in us. We must rise from our knees and go out into the world; but we must not go out into the world without rising from our knees. We must not dare to live a day, or spend a week, without seeking strength to live and spend them on the highest level; and asking Christ to deliver us from temptation, by so dwelling in us, and so filling us with the fulness of His Peace and Joy, that there is no room for anything else.

But if He is to do that, we must continually come back, and seek voluntarily to put ourselves into communion and contact with beauty, goodness, and truth. We must seek to build within ourselves a place of silence, into which we can at will retreat; and there seek God, and lay at His Feet the temptation that has to be met with, and the problem that has to be solved. The possession of this place of silence is one of the secrets of personality; and it is in personality above all other things that our present world is poor. Men go about the world, and the thunder and the roar of it get into the very secret places of their souls; and they live for ever in the midst of a blatant and vulgar noise, which poisons

the spirit, perverts the judgment and destroys the balance of the intellect, sapping away the foundations of personal freedom, and of fine character.

Such a result we have to avoid at all costs. That is the whole object and aim of going to Church. You go to Church, in order that you may take the Church away with you. We have come to think of going to Church as synonymous with listening to sermons. We rail about the dulness of sermons; but we won't go to Church unless they are preached; and that is largely because we have lost the secret of worship. We must have what we call a congregational service, in which we can all join, i.e., in which we can all make a noise. We must have popular hymns and popular Psalms, and we cannot say our Creed unless we all join in. If a very exquisite choir sings the Creed, or chants the Psalms, we say that the Service is not a hearty one, and is not real worship. But, you know, that is all wrong, and it won't do. I never get time to say my Creed properly, unless a choir sings it; in the ordinary way of saying it, it goes too quickly; and I never study the Psalms with so much advantage as when they are beautifully chanted. To suppose that God listens to the noise that we make in Church, and not to the silent worship of our souls, makes nonsense of our relations with Him. There is nothing that is more necessary for our souls' salvation than that we should learn, in Church and out of Church, to be still and know that He is God. It is only in the stillness that that great knowledge comes.

I think, perhaps one of the things in which we clergy have failed the people most, is in our failure to teach them how to be quiet, and to understand the joy of inward silence. The kind of Christianity without Christ, religion without worship, which is so fashionable to-day—the pursuit of the popular preacher as an end in himself, poor beggar, as though he could throw open the doors of God's Kingdom, and set you safely in your place—the religion which makes a tremendous fuss about visiting the widow and orphan in their affliction, but does not even know that there are spots to keep yourself from—is not Christianity; and all the cant that is talked about living a good life without caring or bothering about God, is a caricature of the teaching of Jesus Christ. We need a really spiritual revival, which will call us not merely to the high, but to the highest; to the best and the finest that we know or can know, which is in Him. Popular preaching there must be, and I must go on doing it; but it must be preaching that leads us into His Presence, and into the silence where He dwells, and where His Sacrifice is offered—or it will be vain preaching, however popular it is. If ever I have sought popularity for popularity's sake, may God forgive me, and have mercy on my soul.

There never was so great a need, as there is to-day, for personal religion—conscious contact of the individual soul with that soul's Saviour. The call to redeem the world—the call of the full social mes-

sage to the building of the Kingdom—means not less, but more, personal sanctification; not less, but more care and caution, lest we, who preach and seek to save others, should ourselves become castaways. And yet, true as that is, we must not interpret, "Lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us* from evil," as though it were "Lead *me* not into temptation, but deliver *me* from evil." Urgent and pressing as the need of personal religion is, we should, we must, strive for all we are worth to prevent evil being thrown in the way of those weaker brethren, who, like us, have souls to save. We can have no truck with that abominable hypocrisy by which people who want to make money out of the weakness of others defend themselves, on the ground that they are providing spiritual gymnasiums for the exercise of the muscles of self-control. The benevolent brewer, who protects his dividends with the Pecksniffian plea that it is bad for the people's souls to interfere with the liberty of the subject and restrict the opportunities of drink, we must estimate at his true worth; which is that of all liars, conscious or unconscious. Those who, under cover of the freedom of the Press, present for the edification of the proletariat a hotchpotch of all the garbage that can be collected from the divorce courts, together with detailed accounts of the private lives of criminals and crooks, we must uncompromisingly declare to be the enemies of God's people. Just as we must hunt down and destroy the people who traffic in opium and cocaine, so must we hunt down and destroy these parasites of the free Press, who poison the minds of the people.

We must oppose ourselves relentlessly to all false and superficial ideas of education; and first of all, to the idea that education is confined to schools, and that factories, mills, workshops, theatres, streets, and the homes of the people are not educational institutions. Knowing, as we do, that the factor of suggestion is far more potent educationally than the factor of information, we can have no sympathy with the present-day over-emphasis on the intellect in the training of old and young. The actual information, imparted in our schools, matters much less than the atmosphere in which it is imparted; and the atmosphere of the schools matters much less than the atmosphere of those places in which our people, of necessity, spend the greater part of their lives. The factory exists, not merely to produce cotton, but to produce character. This may not be business, but it is truth. To produce a great quantity of cotton at the expense of a bad quality of character, is to produce, not wealth, but poverty. Constantly we must cry, over our working-people, "Lead them not into temptation, but deliver them from evil"; and we must remember that the answer to our prayer will come in the inspiration that God gives us, so to order their working conditions, so to tackle and solve the intricate problems which industry presents, that it may become the means of producing, not quantities of cheap goods, but multitudes of fine people. Nobody wants grandmotherly legislation, or any attempt to produce virtue by law;

but we must see to it that vested interests and money power do not prevent the real voice of the people from being heard, and their real will to better things having its effect.

Too often what is called public opinion is merely Press opinion, and paid for at that. The Free Press is not really free. It lives very largely on its advertisements, and those who can afford huge sums for advertisement, inasmuch as they pay the piper, can largely call the tune. There are few problems so difficult and so pressing as the securing of a really free Press. For the Education of the people the journalist is at least as important as the schoolmaster and the preacher. To restrict the idea of vocation to the Priesthood is a ruinous business, men are just as much called to be captains of industry, politicians, journalists, actors, musicians, and artists as they are to be Bishops or Curates. That the very best that is in the people should be enabled to get out, and make its effect, is the great necessity of all progress; and if this is to be so, we must cease to imagine that there is a special class of teachers to whom alone belongs the task of education. We must remember that, in a democracy, we educate one another for good or for ill, and that every one of our institutions should be prepared to abide by the test of its educational results. Neither the turnover, nor the dividend, nor the profits, give us the terms in which we must estimate the success or failure of a business; that can only be estimated in terms of living people.

At present we do strange and wonderful things. We spend millions of money and an immense amount of energy and time in the combat with venereal disease, and in the maintenance of the defective, idiotic, blind, and crippled children that are the product of vice. We know how tremendous the strength of sexual passion is; and yet we allow ourselves and our children to be exploited wholesale, by those who make money out of appealing to and artificially stimulating it. It is now proposed, as a remedy for the evil, that we should give our children detailed instruction upon the facts of sex; as though information would in itself give them power of control! I am far from denying that to give children good and decently presented instruction about the facts of life, at the proper age, is of great assistance to them, and is much better than allowing them to learn a distortion of those facts from dirty sources; but the idea that, in and by itself, instruction will keep them pure and clean, has no foundation in fact; and we are tackling the problem very largely at the wrong end. If we want to produce clean people, we must give them decent houses, decent factory conditions, decent wages, and the sense that they work, not merely for their wage, but for their country and their God.

Moreover, we have forgotten that evil is infectious, as infectious as small-pox; and we do not perceive that if we allow whole departments of our life to become purely secular, and to create and maintain moral or immoral standards of their own, in time the whole of life is

bound to become corrupt. We do not perceive how what we call "business morality" undermines all morality, and tends to destroy it. Until it comes to pass that the Christian commandment forbidding us overreach and defraud one another, instead of being an elementary principle of social life, acted upon as a matter of course, has come to be regarded as a highfalutin ideal which everybody pretends to honour, and no one believes it possible to attain, and it is often impossible for a decent boy to go into business without being led unnecessarily into temptation. We can lie in business, we can lie in war, we can lie in politics, we can lie in commerce—get that far, and there soon won't be anywhere where we cannot lie. The law of love is not allowed to operate in business, or in war, or in politics, or in finance; very soon it won't apply to anything. The sanctity of vows has ceased to apply to marriage, or to treaties between nations, or to agreements between employers and employees; in fact, it is a little doubtful where it does apply—certainly nowhere where its application is in the least inconvenient—we tend to regard it as ridiculous, to keep a vow once it hurts us. A man may be "blessed" who swears to his neighbour and disappoints him not, though it were to his own hindrance; but he is not business-like.

So always, everywhere, we go on our way, trying to make the world comfortable, and avoid the cross of principle, or bearing it until it hurts and then throwing it down; but sooner or later there must come a change. If you seek to escape the discipline of faith, you must submit to the discipline of facts. If you will not submit to the hardships of order, you must face the horrors of anarchy; and that applies to the individual soul, to the state, and to the world. The standards of Christ are not arbitrary ideals for exceptional men, they are the bed-rock necessities of social life, we disobey at our peril. If we leave God we can only go into the world without God, and that world knows nothing of mercy or pity, it is as brutal, as bestial, as Russia or Ireland has been in these latter years. It is a world where children are tortured, women dishonoured, and homes destroyed as callously and carelessly as a dog kills a rat. And so just because we hate evil, just because we know how perilous its poison is, and how awful is the risk that, as individuals and communities, we run if once the poison in our blood goes too deep—therefore we must be constantly praying, and acting on our prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," as well as "Deliver us from evil."

If there is in any country a solid body of people who are living with God and holding fast to Him, their life can, for a while, support a large number of careless and godless moral parasites who feed upon their vitality; *but once the parasites get the upper hand, the body politic becomes rotten and is destroyed*; and there is a very real danger in these days lest the parasites may get the upper hand. Because we love and fight for the "bottom dog," there is no need to sentimentalise over

him, and paint him as an angel. The bottom dog is very often a thoroughly "dirty dog," ignorant, credulous, cruel, and full of hatred. The fact that it is not altogether his fault does not make him any different from what he is, or any less dangerous, nor does the fact that it is partly his own fault relieve us of responsibility for him. To point out that the bottom dog is often lazy, thriftless, incompetent and loose, and then dismiss him with a shrug of the shoulders, is the attitude of a fool. All this applies with equal force to many of the top dogs, who have reached the top, but still remain dogs and dirty ones. That they should be at the top is a greater peril than that the others should be at the bottom. It is easy to get out of the trouble by sweeping generalisations which enable you to take sides and shift the blame to someone else. It is easy to say that the workers are work-shy, and the employers greedy, and so turn the problem into a battle. It is always easy to get out of thinking and praying by fighting, always easy—and always useless and mean. But with that sort of nonsense Christianity can have nothing to do. Always and ever we must be making an effort, so to order our world that our people be not led into temptation; and so to educate them, that, in such temptations as they must meet, they will have God to deliver them from evil.

The greatest need of our time is an increase in true religion; an increase of that steadily-burning, persistent passion for private and public righteousness, which comes to the man or woman who really lives with God and really prays.

Somebody wrote to me the other day, and said that I was wasting my time, trying to produce British saints, because the national ideal was not that of a British saint, but of a British sportsman; and he hinted that, really in my heart of hearts, I knew that, and had it as my own ideal of life. There is much of kinship between the sportsman and the saint. Both are gamblers, who bet their lives upon a great chance. To the true sportsman, life is a great game and he bets his brain, muscle, and blood, if need be, that his side will win; and a saint is one who plays the game on its highest level, with God for his leader and righteousness for his cause, and everything he possesses for the stakes. The two ideals are not incompatible, but complementary. It is right that we should take life as a great game, but utterly wrong that we should imagine that games are life. That is just one of many idolatries. Football is the most popular religion in England to-day; but it will not save us either in body or in soul. We need a bigger game and higher stakes. Gambling, like all vices, is the perversion of a virtue; and the sportsmen of the lower level, who hang about our street corners buying up the sporting editions, are perverted saints, betting their pitiful poverty upon petty issues, for the sake of passing excitement—instead of staking all the wealth and the glory of life to attain a great and lasting achievement.

Plato calls immortality (which to him, as to Christ, was eternal life beginning now and ending never) "a glorious venture"—a splendid gamble.

That is the root of the sin of gambling, it is the perversion of the instinct of adventure and enterprise, an instinct which is one of our most priceless possessions. Upon that instinct real progress does, and must always, depend, and to find an outlet for it on a mean and trivial level is individually and socially disastrous. All sin is perverted instinct, and there is no sin which is more pregnant with moral ruin than this. The Christian who compromises with gambling is a fool and a traitor to his Lord.

We need God to make our sportsmen saints, and our would-be saints into real sportsmen, who know life to be a glorious battle with the chance of everlasting victory, and who go to it with the cry of the Good Soldier on their lips, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

And sitting down they watched Him there,
The Soldiers did.
There, while they played with dice,
He made His sacrifice,
And died upon the Cross to rid
God's world of sin.
He was a gambler too,
My Christ,
He took His life and threw
It for a world redeemed.
And e'er His agony was done
Before the westering sun went down,
Crowning that day with its crimson crown
He knew
That He had won.

LIES AND DRUGS

Mark 15:23

It was a common enough scene in those days, an advanced collecting post for wounded in the Ypres Salient, on the evening of June 15, 1917. Twenty men all smashed up and crammed together in a little concrete shelter which would have been full with ten in it. Outside the German barrage banging down all round us. The one guttering candle on the edge of a broken wire-bed going out every five minutes when a salvo of 5.9's from Pilkom Ridge shook the place to its foundations. A boy with a badly shattered thigh in a corner moaning and yelling by turns for "Somefing to stop the pain." So it had been for an hour or more. Between this Black Hole of Calcutta and Battalion H.Q. Death and Hell to go through. Hell inside and hell out, and the moaning of the boy in the corner like the moaning of a damned soul. "The pain—the pain—my Gawd—the pain. For Gawd's sake gimme somefing to stop the pain."

There was no morphia. That was the horror. Some one must go for it. I went. I went because the hell outside was less awful than the hell in. I didn't go to do an heroic deed or perform a Christian service; I went because I couldn't bear that moaning any longer. I ran, and as I ran, and cowered down in shell-holes waiting for a chance to run again, I thought—thought like lightning—whole trains of thought came tearing through my mind like non-stop expresses to God knows where. I thought: Poor devil, I couldn't have stood that a minute longer. I wasn't doing any good either. If I get through and bring the morphia back, it will be like bringing back heaven to him. That is the only heaven he wants just now, dead-drunk sleep. If I bring it back, I will be to him a saviour from hell. I'd like that. It's worth while. I'm glad I thought of that. I can't pretend that it was that I came for. It wasn't. Still I'm glad. He wants to forget, to forget and sleep. Poor old chap. Heaven in a morphia pill. Funny things drugs are. It's mysterious their power. Fancy putting Heaven in a pill-box, and keeping it by your bedside. Beastly dangerous. How can men resist when things get bad beyond bearing. It is so simple, so easy, so damnably easy. Raving mad one minute, swallow a pill, and then comes the delicious fading death of all sensation—when aches and pains seem far away and only Peace seems real, and then sleep. How do men resist, and women? Don't we all want to forget? I came out here to forget. I came out because I was too much of a coward to stand that

moaning any longer. This mad business is a drug to me. I wanted to forget. All men want to more or less. Drugs—the world is full of Drugs.

Christ wouldn't have His. Turned His head away. He hated it. I can understand that too. There is something disgraceful about drugs. They are shameful. It's a kind of running away. It means surrender. It's so beastly easy. There is the other instinct. The instinct to defy the Devil. The instinct to live, to think, to see it through, however much it costs. That is the Life force, I suppose. Come to think of it—that's God. God is Life, and Drugs are death, and it's a fight between the two. All life is a matter of Life and Death. Death sleep—forgetting—drugs—they are the Devil, the very Devil—the great adversary of God. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." I never thought of that before. That is the whole meaning of Science and History—a scrap between God and the Devil. The Spirit of Life and the Spirit of Death. The struggle for existence. God is Life—God is Life in plants, animals, and men. He has to struggle for existence in them all, but it is harder the higher He goes, and hardest in man. He is all-powerful in the end. He gets there. You can't drug God. You couldn't drug Christ. He wouldn't have it. In Him was Life. I understand. It's fatal to forget when you ought to remember—it's wrong to run when you ought to stand. Drugs are God's mercy, a last resort. You must not presume on it or it will turn to poison. We must not forget. It's suicide. I must not forget.

I suppose that is the meaning of the Sacrament. Do this in Remembrance of Me—Eat, Drink, and Remember. God calls us to drink and Remember—Satan to drink and forget. God bids us drink and remember the Cross—His Burden of Love that a man should share—share with God and not shirk. Drugs are the Sacraments of Satan, the means of damnation. You must take up the Cross or die. You cannot stand outside the struggle for existence and live. It's an eternal law, and the Cross is the revelation of what it means to God, and ought to mean to us.

How clear it all is. All narcotics are the devil. All narcotics. What a lot there are in the world when you come to think of it. It isn't only drink—though that is a big drug. Half the civilised world is doped with drink. The Czar of Russia has ruled for centuries by the power of Vodka, and even Britain sleeps on beer. Drink is a great drug. Then lust—the service of the flesh. The everlasting pleasure hunt. Luxury. All drugs—all putting the life of the soul to sleep—calling men to forget their manhood. They all act in the same way. There is the period of Peace when pain and worry seem to fade away; then the awakening and the pain again—either that or death. Just like morphia. There is the craving too for more—the craving that grows and will not be satisfied. That is the way with lust. It sweeps you up to heaven—no need for effort, no need for struggle; you are in the world and out of it—and heaven is a woman's arms into which you sink and sleep. But there comes the awakening. What's that in Browning's "Pippa Passes"? I

always remember that. "Wipe off that paint. I hate you!" It does not last. It lifts you up to heaven, and bumps you back again to hell.

That's the way with pleasure-hunting too. Does for a while, but won't last. You get fed-up—bored. A bed of roses is mostly thorns, and too many lilies have a sickly smell. It's the same with business, work, position-hunting, and ambition. They have no bottom and no top. You wake up and find that you have been breaking your neck with hurry to get nowhere in particular. Energy without an eternal object is a drug that puts one's real self to sleep.

Furious action is a strong drug. It drowns thought. This business would drug me if I'd let it. But I won't. I'm a coward, but I hate being a coward. I hate drugs. I want to live. I want to live, and think, and face things out. I won't go to sleep. God, my God, I want to live with you—give me strength. I want to turn my head away. There is this craving to forget, to sleep. It gets you all roads. There is only one way to meet it. God—God growing in one's insides—God struggling for existence in my mind, and refusing to be drugged. Christ in me the hope of glory. The only one. That's it—Religion—the passion for God. A man must have it. The world must have it, or die—Religion.

But men can turn religion into a narcotic too. They have done it. A lot of religion is just opium—going to church and singing sentimental hymns, and listening to beautiful sermons, praying finely-worded prayers. It's opium. It lifts you up to heaven on Sunday and drops you down on a cold leg of mutton on Monday.

A lot of what passes for religion is just Fatalism. What 'as to be, 'as to be—it's Gawd's will. Fold your hands and close your eyes and rest. God is just the cause of everything. He is the unknown and unknowable, inscrutable Supreme Being whose will is Fate. He is the beginning and the end—the Almighty. He maps out one's life, and sends peace, war, health and disease, poverty or wealth, joy or sorrow as He wills.

Choose Thou my friends for me,
My sickness or my health.
Choose Thou my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth.

Why struggle—why strive—why seek to alter things? What is to be, is to be. Thy will be done. Safe in the arms of Jesus. Peace, perfect peace. Good night—sleep, sweet sleep. A lot of religion is just that, and that is the devil—the very devil. That's queer, isn't it? It's queer that people should mix up Life and Death—God and the Devil. Yet I suppose that's just it. The Devil is the great liar—the final lie—and he must live on Truth. He must imitate God or perish.

Anyhow, this drug religion is the devil. That's settled. It's a wrong idea of God. It's a lie—an idol. It's sacrilege on the Sacrament. It

turns the Chalice into a hypodermic squirt. It turns the Cup of Remembrance into an opium pipe. It is loathsome, like all drugs. God is not the unknowable and inscrutable Fate that does good and evil alike to serve His ends. God is this force of life and love and thought and creative energy that wrestles with death in all the world, and wrestles with it in me. Faith in that, love of that, communion with that, is religion. Real religion is not a drug; it's a stimulant. It is not opium; it is rum—the only real rum there is. The world wants a real rum ration. We must not forget. We must not sleep. Drugs won't do. We must have Life. We must not forget. If we ever do, it will come again. That is certain. Can we forget it? We have forgotten before. There are so many drugs. It will come back again, the old life. Satan will call us by every lie he knows to forget. I wonder will the people fall asleep again? Shall we go back to the old ways—the old struggle for narcotics to put our souls to sleep? Shall we forget? Shall we drug ourselves and fall asleep, and allow it all to fester underneath the skin of life until it bursts again into an open bleeding sore—like this? God forbid! It must not be. It shall not be. I've done with drugs. I want to live. God—Great God of Life—teach me to remember; teach us to remember—we must not forget.

It's two years or more since I thought those thoughts, but time has not made them any less vivid in my mind. I am thinking again now. It is very peaceful. There is a bowl of roses on my study table. My child is playing on the patch of garden outside. I can hear my wife calling him, and his gleeful little voice chuckling as he runs away to hide. I have just had tea. It is peace. I can feel the old life creeping round me, calling me. The past seems like an impossible dream—a nightmare. Life is just the same. I am back in July 1914. There is the daily paper on my table, with its account of the daily strike. In its pages the poor blame the idle rich, and the rich blame the idle poor, and everybody blames Lloyd George. Everybody says that the country is going to ruin, and nobody believes it. Everybody says that the Peace is a patched-up Peace, and everybody believes that it is as safe as the Bank of England, and that of course is a great deal safer than God. The great British Democracy is falling back into its old groove. The War is over.

We are very tired and very irritable, and we want to get back to business as usual, beer as usual, pleasure as usual, sleep as usual, and wake up in hell as usual. You can see it coming. The great mass of people are calling out for the common drugs—women, beer, and business, and the social reformers are drinking deep of the drug of furious action based on no principle and no purpose. The one side want to change nothing, and the other to change everything, but God alone knows what they want to change it for. Every one is really clamouring for more drugs to dope themselves with. The memory of the dreadful years is growing dim. We are falling back on the old lies.

Mutual distrust and suspicion, class-war fostered and fomented from abroad, selfish greed and personal ambition for power, are putting all industry more and more on a war basis. Talk about the great moral ideals for which we fought is hackneyed now, and platitudinous. Everybody tends to take all that for granted, which means that they do not take it at all.

Democracy—that great word which was worth a war to keep in the dictionary—is being degraded as usual into a name for free drug stores, free pleasure, free leisure, free comfort, free everything. Get all and pay nothing. Why, doesn't the Government do it?

Democracy, which ought to be a trumpet call, is being taken as a lullaby. We want to sleep again. If we do, it can have but one end—the death of Democracy—a painful death in the flames of a furnace heated seven times hotter than 1914. Democracy is a national vocation. It is the call of God to develop every scrap of human material to the highest possible perfection. “If anything ever profoundly surprised me,” says Mazzini, speaking of Democracy, “it is that so many persons have hitherto been blind to the eminently religious character of the movement.” Democracy cannot exist in any real sense apart from true religion. The whole essence of it is the enormous weight of responsibility it throws upon the average man. It is, as Carlyle said, “the huge inevitable product of the destinies,” because it is the inevitable result of man's growth, his growth towards complete manhood, that is, towards complete responsibility for his actions. The true democrat is the man who claims for himself and for all his fellows the right to bear responsibility. But the man who claims the burden of responsibility without training himself to bear it is not a democrat but a fool. *Corruptio optimi pessima*. The best thing is the worst thing if the thing goes bad. The corruption of Democracy is national damnation, and a Democracy must go bad unless Demos has a God—a real living God—who counts in the public life. We must have God; we must have a red religion which burns and blazes and calls men—calls them to service, renunciation, and sacrifice.

When men have seen the true vision of God there will be on earth a true Democracy. The ancient conception of God as an absolute monarch sitting on a throne, crowned with a jewelled crown, with the sceptre in His hand, could not be the God of Democracy. We do not honour kings as kings any more. We cannot believe any longer that there can be such a thing as the divine right to rule; we can only recognise the divine right to serve. Christ has so far come into His own that He has cast down from their thrones all kings and princes, except those who have been content to resign all pretence to absolute power and have taken upon themselves the form of a servant, founding their kingdoms on their peoples' gratitude and respect for honest service done.

It has been a long time coming, and it is not yet fully come, but the doom of all Kaisers, Czars, snobs, and autocrats is recognised as in-

evitable, and with them must go the old God. The Sultan of the universe has been slain. Most of the sorrows of the present time are caused by the interregnum. The old God is dead, and the new one has not yet been crowned. The king is dead, but the peoples have not shouted God save the king. But the coronation day is drawing near, when Christ shall be crowned with His crown of thorns, and throned once more upon His cross, and men will draw near to worship the Suffering Lover of the human race who is their real God.

When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Every man then will be proud to call himself a minister—a servant of the people, and proud to suffer and to labour for the human race, because he will have seen Jesus washing weary pilgrims' feet.

That passion for service in the name of Christ is the only motive which can be made powerful enough to get the world's work done without compulsion, powerful enough to keep us working at our hardest, dealing honestly with our neighbour, denying ourselves the profits of corruption, scheming, and lying; powerful enough to ensure the universal rule of Right over Might, and of Justice over Greed. We shall not dare to wake unless He wakes us; we cannot come to ourselves unless we come through Him. If Democracy is to come, we must throw aside our false gods and come to Him and let Him come to us. We are bound to forget unless we drink the Cup of Remembrance and learn to worship the Suffering Servant of the human race—to love Him with our whole heart, mind and soul, and follow Him at all costs. He stands now at a thousand altars and pleads with us by the sorrow of our suffering world, by the piles of broken bodies and ruins of lost homes, by the barren years of widows and the cry of fatherless children, by all the dreary waste of War. He pleads with us "To drink and remember" what it means to Him. He stands there with the Cup of Remembrance in His hands. Are we able to drink of the cup that He drinks of, and to be baptized with the baptism that He is baptized with? We are able—we must be able or perish. Human nature cries:

Let me forget! Let me forget!
I am weary of remembrance,
And my face is ever wet
With the tears of my remembrance,
With the tears and bloody sweat.
Let me forget.

God answers:

If ye forget—if ye forget,
Then your children must remember,
And their face be ever wet
With the tears of their remembrance,
With the tears and bloody sweat,
If ye forget.

“HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN”

Acts 1:9

DID HE? Where is Heaven? What is it? Is it a place? Is it a spiritual condition? Can we know what it is, or where it is? God is Spirit, without body, parts, or passions. What do you mean by “Sitteth at the right hand of the Father”? You cannot mean it literally because He has not got a hand. You cannot mean that He literally sat down. Do you mean that He literally went up? Is this history or allegory? Did He really ascend? Was there ever a day or night when that small band stood with upturned faces gazing into the clouds and straining their eyes to catch a glimpse of the slowly disappearing Figure with hands outstretched to bless them in His last farewell? And suppose He did go up into the Heavens, suppose it was an actual case of self-levitation, what difference does it make to you or me? It is an extraordinary story, and if it is a fact it is a very interesting fact, and calls for careful scientific investigation and a search to see if any similar cases are recorded in history, and if there are, to study their common features with a view to finding out what general law governs such occurrences. There is, of course, Elijah going up in a whirlwind into Heaven, but that is not very certain history, is it? It does not really help us very much. And, altogether apart from the question of fact, why should it be considered necessary for my soul’s health in this year 1920, to believe that Jesus Christ disappeared from this earth almost two thousand years ago by an act of self-levitation, and went upwards into space until He was out of sight? Granted for the moment that He did do it, what odds does it make to me now, or to anybody else? Does it matter whether I believe it as a fact or treat it as a beautiful legend? Of course, I don’t deny its beauty; I think the pictures of the Ascension are amongst the most inspiring and exalting that great art has ever given us—but does it matter to me and to the world whether this actually happened or not?

Here are two distinct questions. Did it happen? and what difference does it make if it did?

Let us get down to the first. Did it happen? did He ascend? The only evidence that we have for the picture which is so familiar and so gloriously beautiful—the picture of that dear and well-beloved Figure rising slowly from the earth, with pierced hands held out in everlasting benediction—the only evidence we have for it is the testimony of St. Luke. St. John does not give it, nor does St. Matthew; the end of St. Mark was not written by St. Mark, and it does not give the picture, only

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just the fact, "He was taken up into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God," the second part of which is evidently symbolic, so why not the first? It is St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles who has given us the picture. Is it true?

How can I tell for certain? How can any one tell? If one is to approach the question coldly, and in a sceptical spirit, remembering the honest man's duty of doubt, it seems to me that the only conclusion we can come to upon the evidence is that it cannot be proved. The evidence is not sufficiently strong to convince a reasonable and impartial person approaching the matter in a purely scientific spirit.

Well, does not that give the whole show away? That is what I have always felt, you say, ever since I was a child. The Christian Creed won't wash or wear. When you plunge it into the cold water of reason it shrinks until there is nothing left of it, nothing save this splendid but shadowy Figure Who fades away into the mists of time, and leaves us alone with wars and workhouses, factory chimneys and squalid streets—alone in a modern mechanical, vulgar world of sordid realities. O my God, these tales of unbearable beauty that break the hearts of men because they are not true! I came out of Birmingham Cathedral, from the Burne-Jones window of the Ascension, into the twilight streets, and an amateur prostitute giggled. The oldest profession in the world—dreams and reality. Bother your beastly questions. If it is a dream, why need you come in with your vulgarity and spit on your fingers to turn it over and examine it? I am sick of your book and your honesty. Do we not need our dreams? I have never asked myself these questions before, and why need I ask them at all? Better men than you have believed it without question, and who are you to doubt them? Go and say your prayers, and ask God to strengthen your faith.

That's one me. But there is another that answers, "Please, I don't want to be vulgar, and I don't want to be blatant. I don't want to ask questions, but the beastly things ask themselves. They kept on asking themselves while I was saying my prayers. Is it true? How do you know it is? Isn't it only a fool's paradise this faith of yours? You have only St. Luke for it, and it is a strange and unique occurrence. You must be honest first and religious afterwards—you know you must. You know the horrors that come if you twist those things the wrong way round—orthodox lies for the glory of God. It's no use, you must be honest first." Of course, there are more things in Heaven or earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy or any one else's, if it comes to that, but then the fact that anything may be true is no proof that any one thing is. The fact that Christ may have ascended does not prove that He did; you have no evidence that will convince an impartial intellect, and that ends it.

But does it? I doubt if intellect ever ends it. It is not big enough. You cannot take this story and cut it off from all the rest, isolate it and put it under the microscope of historical criticism, and then decide that

there is nothing in it. You cannot get at the real truth of it that way, you would only get the same result as a chemist would who analysed the Sistine Madonna and expressed it in chemical formula; it would be truth of a sort, but not the truth; it would be an abstract truth, which, like lawyers' truth, is often another name for lies. You see, it is palpable, blunder-headed nonsense to say that a picture is only canvas and paint; it is plainly and obviously a great deal more than that. The reality in a picture is the power that draws and moulds men's minds, that haunts and grips their thoughts; the reality of the picture is the personality of the painter. That is what it really is. A great song is not a series of atmospheric vibrations causing molecular changes in the matter of the brain, it is laughter and tears, it is joy and sorrow, it is life itself, it is a person calling to a person, a heart that seeks a heart. It is hard to put these things into words, but you understand what I mean, don't you? This Ascension picture is not merely itself—bald, isolated, historical fact; the reality of the Ascension picture is the Personality of the Ascending Christ. Before we can properly weigh and estimate the value of the evidence for its reality we must have some understanding of that Personality.

You must take up the Christian challenge in its due order, you cannot swallow it whole, it will give you indigestion, mental, moral, and spiritual stomach-ache; before you decide about the Ascension of Christ you must decide about Christ Himself. Who and what was He—a myth? a magician? a man? the Perfect Man? a God? You must start where those who lived and died for their Ascended Lord started, face to face with Jesus. You must have seen Jesus before you can see the Ascending and Ascended Christ. You must have set out to follow Him, and you must have found Him at once inevitable, impossible, and infectious—in a word, Divine. You must have found Him in your own soul, crucified, continually crucified, and yet rising again, before you can grasp the meaning of His Ascension. You can only pass through Good Friday and Easter Day to your Ascension-tide. It is no mere put-off that. You must know what a man was, what his power and his character was, before you can rightly judge about the truth or falsehood of an event recorded in his life. What might quite well happen to one person might be utterly impossible for another.

There is always the factor of personality to be reckoned with in estimating historical reality. If I did not believe that Jesus Christ was like no other person that ever lived, if I did not believe that He was unique, the one and only, this story would have no reality for me; it would be as the fairy tales, shadow without substance, which is a sickening diet for working men. But if you have entered into the challenge thus far, if you have taken up the life and the struggle it demands, if you have set out on the great adventure, it makes a whole lot of difference. The reality of the story will then become more and more an absolute necessity for you. I know that that is an argument

with a double edge. That is just it, you say, that is how it all came about. These early Christians had taken up the life, they had fallen under the spell of the great illusion, "The King had bound them by such vows as were a shame a man should not be bound by, yet the which no man can keep," and being under that illusion, and bound by such vows, the story became a necessity to them, and they invented it. That is a natural reply, and if you can still believe that the Christian life is a great illusion, and that there is no reality behind it, if you can still believe that Christianity is one of the great world lies, and that Christian hopes and longings are all destined to end in disappointment, then I do not think there is any chance that you will be able to find any reality in this story. In that case we must go back before we can go on. We must go back and stand before the Character and ask ourselves again, What about it? What about Him? I believe in the Ascension because of Christ. I do not believe in Christ because of the Ascension.

The thing is this. Across the ages, when I take up the New Testament, I find myself talking with men who knew Some One that I know, who loved Some One that I love, and who worshipped Some One that I worship. This Person, as far as this world was concerned, was a dead failure. His earthly career fizzled out upon the Cross. He was like a Very light shot up into the sky, dazzling the eye with its brilliance, and then dying away to leave a deeper darkness behind. They all knew that, these men. They all knew that from a worldly point of view His Life was one succession of failures, that His career was as unlike that of the Messiah the people expected as it well could be—He could not even get twelve entirely faithful followers. Yet I find these men calmly confident that He was and is the One Supreme success, that in Him, and in Him alone, there is no failure but complete and perfect triumph. How did He succeed in producing this impression upon them? St. Luke may be the only one who records the picture, but he is not by any means the only one who records the impression. That is universal among Christians. How did it become so? He went away and left them—left them to fight it out apparently by themselves, and they did not have such a blazing good time either. The whole world did not fall upon their necks and embrace them as saviours, they had a job to get on at all. The Church they built was not such a howling success, it was a poor struggling thing. Yet these men and women remained unshaken in their confidence that it had the root of the matter in it, because He was in it and with it always until the end of the world.

How did they come by this conviction? Why were they not cast down and broken-hearted when He left them? Why were they not plunged into the depths of despair as they were after the Crucifixion? The answer that they gave was that although He went away, the manner of His going was such that it convinced them that all was well, that

He would come again, and that meanwhile they would not be left alone and leaderless, but that in some new way He would be with them still. The manner of His going was not like a retreat, but like an advance; it spoke of victory, and not defeat. It was not a departure, it was an ascension, it was the revelation of what He was—equal with God. They were not down-hearted, because Jesus was with God, and God was with them, and could never leave them.

That is their account of how it was they were not down-hearted, but bubbling over with excitement and expectation. Christ had fought, and Christ had won; in Him was victory. That was the universal Christian impression. Whether St. Luke gives an exact and accurate account of the way in which that impression was produced, or whether he gives the traditional picture in which Christ's followers were wont to express the impression made upon them by His departure, cannot, I believe, be decided with certainty on the evidence we have. I think it is the simplest and easiest supposition to go upon, that the picture is substantially accurate, but whether it is or not, it is certain that it describes in the most vivid and compelling fashion the convictions that His departure created in the minds of those who witnessed it. He went away triumphant and to come again. It was an ascension, not a failure and farewell. That is certain, and that is the main thing. The manner in which the conviction was created is not so important, the conviction that this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, that is all-important, and it is, and always has been, the essence of Christianity. But you may say, Yes, I know the impression of victory is the main thing, but was it not a false impression, were not these early Christians confident that He would come again quite soon, were they not expecting that the Second Coming was only a matter of months, or at most of a few years? You mention that in your chapter on the Resurrection—the expectation of a Second Coming quite soon; and has not that expectation proved to be a fizzle too? You see He has not come, and there are no real signs of His Coming. They thought He would come again within a year or two, come in clouds of glory, and take His power to reign, and we look around the world and see only this after the Passion of two thousand years. The promise of His Second Coming has not been fulfilled. They were mistaken, those early Christians, they were mistaken about this. How can we be sure that they were not mistaken about His Ascension too? How can we be sure that it was not just a legend which grew up to express their early enthusiasm and buoy them up in their false hopes? To them the Ascension evidently meant the completed, final triumph of Christ. His work was done, His sorrow ended, His redemption of the world an accomplished fact. Can it mean that to us? To them His return to Heaven was like the return of an Eastern conqueror, with sin and death as captives in His train.

To meet Him all His saints, who silent stood
 Eye-witnesses of His Almighty acts,
 With jubilee advanced, and as they went,
 Shaded with branching palm, each order bright
 Sung triumph and Him, sung Victorious King,
 Son, heir, and Lord, to Him dominion give,
 Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode
 Triumphant through mid-heaven into the courts
 And temple of His Mighty Father, throned
 On high, Who unto glory Him received,
 Where now He sits at the right hand of Bliss.

That is what it meant to them. Can it mean that to us? Can we regard
 His task as accomplished and His triumph as complete when

Here on the earth as years pass by,
 Centuries piled upon Calvary,
 The story of man is but one long line
 Of insults heaped on the plan Divine.
 Murder and misery, rape and war,
 Sin like an open, festering sore,
 Oozing its filth through the souls of men,
 Dragging them down to the dust again,
 Worming its way through their noblest deeds,
 Burying God in their Godless creeds.
 Priests that spit in the face of Christ,
 Cardinals decked for the traitorous tryst
 They keep with a God their souls despise,
 For the policy's sake of the worldly wise.
 Children conceived and born in sin,
 Rotten with syphilis, soaked in gin,
 Housed like pigs in their filthy stys,
 Cursed from the day they opened their eyes.

Is not this triumph of Christ a mockery? Is not this victory which
 was assured to the first Christians by the manner of His departure a
 lie? Does it not look as if the whole conception was an illusion and the
 New Testament merely the story of a great human hope that history
 has killed as it has killed a million other splendid hopes, and will prob-
 ably kill a million more?

How can it be that Christ can reign in glory,
 Calmly content with what His love has done,
 Reading unmoved the piteous, shameful story
 Of the vile deeds men do beneath the sun?

If Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, then His soul
 must be wrung now as it was wrung in the days of His flesh, as He

looks down upon the world as it is to-day. Once more these two thousand years must make a difference. We cannot disregard them. Once more, I say, time may be nothing to God, but if He is a reality at all, sin must be much, and these two thousand years have been two thousand years of sin—of sin and suffering beyond the power of any words to compass or express. If they change for us the Resurrection experience, they must change for us the Ascension experience too. It cannot be for us a perfect and completed thing; we are bound to see it against a different background—against the background of the two thousand years. History has done its worst, done its very damndest, to kill the hope, to destroy the faith, and rob us of our certainty, but once again the gallant Creed rings out its note of defiance. It has not killed the hope, it cries; the hope, nay, more, the calm and confident certainty, still burns and blazes in the hearts of those who have found God in Christ. To them the final reality of life is perfectly expressed in Christ Crucified, Risen, and Ascending, with hands outstretched to bless them. That is what they see everywhere. They do not see Him regnant on a great white throne, with all His work behind Him, and all His sorrow done—they know He sorrows now, as He did then—but they do see Him as the equal of the Highest, the expression, the very image, of what the Power behind life is. If they look into their own souls they find Him there—crucified, but deathless and ascending—Christ in them the Hope of Glory, bound to triumph in the end. If they look at the history of the world with its struggle and its strife and its sin, they find Him, once more crucified, but deathless and ascending, slowly but surely coming to His own, irresistibly moving to the accomplishment of His purpose. We do not presume to pierce beyond the veil to regions that we do not know, to truths beyond those which the Incarnation has revealed. We do not any longer draw imaginary pictures of splendid courts and glistening thrones, of perfect songs of triumph unbroken by a discord or a flaw. We do not venture to give Christ in Heaven what He never would have on earth, the symbols of material power. We are content with the picture that has been given us, the picture of the dear and well-beloved Figure with the pierced hands, slowly rising upwards into regions out of sight, and that picture makes all history luminous. History is not the story of the descent of man from the apes, but the ascent of God in Man to the Angels. We believe in the Risen and Ascending Christ, and we find evidence of it everywhere.

Had we clung fast to the Truth revealed in the Ascension, the Revelation of the meaning of Life and History that it contains, the new knowledge of God's method of creation by evolution might have been for us a pure and unmixed blessing. We would never have allowed ourselves to look down to the beasts for the meaning of life as we did, we would have remained steadfastly gazing up into Heaven. We would never have been deceived into thinking that because we were de-

scended from the jungle, therefore the laws of the jungle must govern our lives for ever. We would never have allowed the blasphemy to be spread abroad that strife, struggle, war, and remorseless competition were the laws of God. The blight of pseudo-scientific cant would never have ruined our social lives. We would have known that evolution was not a descent but an ascension, not a mechanical and determined ascension, but a moral and spiritual progress which can only take place as men are in Christ, living their life in His Spirit, and basing their thought on His law—the law of Love. Had we clung fast to the Ascending Christ, and refused to surrender His truth to Godless economists, there might have been no Manchester school, and no slums, no Treitschke, no Nietzsche, and no battle of the Somme. We might before now have succeeded in building the New Jerusalem in this island home of ours.

We have forsaken the Truth and paid the inevitable penalty, but let us return to it now.

There is in it power to heal the gaping wounds of war.

We can turn away from that picture, and with its truth as our great treasure firm and fast we can honestly face the facts of life, and stare them in the face, and defy their power to hurt or harm, in the power of the Ascending Christ.

THE WORD WITH GOD

“And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2).

AN OLD INDIAN TEACHER used to say: “The dumbness in the eyes of animals is more touching than the speech of man, but the dumbness in the speech of man is more agonizing than the eyes of animals.” Human speech when it aspires to express anything beyond the lowest levels of thought and feeling is an effort to express the inexpressible. Even the speech of our Lord is that; hence that pathetic cry: “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” It is at once a warning to man, and a

prayer to God. The weakness of words was one of the woes that went to make up Calvary, as it has gone to make the cross of every real poet, prophet, preacher, and teacher ever since the world began. The shadow of that Cross lies dark upon the glory of St. John.

"This person expressing a rational purpose was eternally with God, and, indeed, was God, and yet it is truer to say that He was with God." He is face to face with the final mystery, and, as usual, words fail him; he cannot say it. He wants to say with all the power of his being that *God can and must be known*, that men can hear and have heard Him speak, that our knowledge of God is a reality, the greatest and most necessary of realities, here and now upon this earth. He wants to protest, and protest with passion, against the unknown and unknowable God so dear to the natural man, the "Supreme Being," whom everybody acknowledges but nobody cares a rap about. Formal and consciously formulated atheism is scarcely ever real atheism. It is generally the worship of some neglected aspect of God in mistake for the whole of Him. Professing atheists are often religious people, protesting against some caricature of God which they suppose, or have been taught, is His reality. Real atheism, which is either sin or nervous disease, may be ready to acknowledge that there must be a God, but denies that He is or can be known by man. A passionate blasphemer is often as near to the Kingdom of God as Saul the persecutor was to Paul the prophet, when he witnessed the stoning of Stephen. He blasphemes because he half believes. Real atheism denies that the Word is God, denies that there is any rational purpose in life which men can enter into and understand.

This denial, if it be persisted in, means the death of the human soul. It lies at the root of all sin. For the man who denies that life has a purpose of its own there is nothing left but to invent a purpose for life. This is what he inevitably does. He takes the world and tries to make it serve his purpose and submit to his will. Since he cannot know God, he worships the only God he can know, which is himself, and the inevitable result of this idolatry is disillusion and despair, and the greater the man is the more awful is the tragedy. The supreme example, perhaps, is Napoleon, whose uniquely powerful natural genius enabled him to blast, pound, tear, and torture the world in order to shape it to his will, only to find that it would not bend, but that he must break, and listen at last to the judgment of the sea as it cried against the cliffs of St. Helena. The world is full of Napoleons, only different because they are so puny and so small, scheming, planning, twisting and torturing the world in a million futile blundering ways to make it serve their little human ends, until their natural force abates, and life throws them aside to grumble and to die. That is the monotonous miserable story of a million million lives, and its constant repetition is the most searching challenge to faith in God of which I know. A challenge and yet a confirmation, for it does proclaim and

reproclaim the necessity of God, a God who can be known and loved, with whom we can, in however small a way, co-operate, becoming in St. Paul's audacious phrase, "fellow-workers with Him," and so finding life.

The growth of modern knowledge has, in many subtle ways, strengthened the temptation to that real atheism which denies that God can be known, or the purpose of life in any real sense be understood by man.

Science has revealed to us the vast infinities of space and time, and added so much to the immensities of the universe that our minds reel back amazed and afraid. We cry out, with a new fear that perhaps there is no one to hear our cry, "What is man that Thou should'st be mindful of him or the Son of Man that Thou should'st visit him at all." Moreover, not only has our conception of the universe become greater, but life in it has become more complex. Not merely is the individual daunted, cowed, and baffled by the gigantic spectacle of nature, as science reveals it to him, but he is swallowed up in the multitude of our teeming populations, and bewildered by the intricate network of human relationships in which he must become entangled if he is to live at all. The temptation to give it all up as a bad job is tremendous. It comes in all sorts of guises. It borrows the raiment of humility, and appears as a prophet denouncing human pride. What can we ridiculous creatures who crawl about on the surface of a minor planet set for a time in the timeless and spaceless eternity of things, know about the meaning and purpose of creation? It is only our presumption and fatuous conceit that deceives us into supposing that we know, or can ever know, the meaning of it all. Do not common honesty, reasonable reverence, and proper humility demand from us a frank acknowledgment that it is utterly above and beyond us, that we neither know nor can know anything as to its ultimate meaning and purpose?

This attitude, moreover, appeals to the natural sloth which is in us all. Sir Almroth Wright has said that "a pain in the mind is the prelude to all discovery," and it is certain that we never think or strive to solve a problem unless it hurts us to leave it unsolved, and many of us will not move unless the unsolved problem hurts us very badly. We need a pain and a very sharp pain, either in the mind or somewhere else, before we are willing to face the effort of thought. If we can by any means soothe the pain, and, as we say, "set our minds at rest" without thought, there is for all of us a strong temptation to do it. Of course, thinking, praying, and seeking are great joys—the greatest of joys—to some men and women, just as climbing mountains, swimming channels, rowing races are joys to many; but even they must either keep themselves in constant training, or find a stimulus to drive them to the effort. If, in addition to this great advantage of peace without pain, agnosticism affords us the satisfaction of

conscious superiority over those who are fools enough to assert that God can be known, and we can have the pleasure of displaying our deeper wisdom, the cycle of its powerful attractions is complete.

Come unto me, says the Unknown and Unknowable God, and I will give you rest, sleep, and entire self-satisfaction. What more could any man want? And yet we do want more. We want life and love, and power to heal the wounds of our humanity. And these the Unknown God has not to give. If we can shut our ears to the voice of mankind, and remain blind to their signals of distress; if we can content ourselves with the book of life before us, written in a language which we cannot read, and make no attempt to learn the language, we may indeed die gracefully and harmlessly, but we cannot hope to live. For my part I cannot do it.

I want to live, live out, not wobble through
My life somehow, then out into the dark,
I must have God. This life's too dull without,
Too dull for ought but suicide. What's Man
To live for else? I'd murder someone just
To see red blood. I'd drink my self blind drunk
And see blue snakes, if I could not look up
To see blue skies, and hear God speaking through
The silence of the stars.

You might not, gentle reader, be so base as that. You may be much more civilized, and it may seem to you to be extravagant, but I am a primitive, vulgar man, and I would take either to drink, sensuality, or crude personal ambition. You, perhaps, would be content with more refined and decent drugs, modern novels, problem plays, scandal, bridge, mild gambling, and all the proper apparatus we clever people use to dull the pain of boredom, and the emptiness of life. You would not murder any one, but you might crush to see a murderer tried for his life, or help to absorb the ocean of evening papers which enable us to enjoy a murder without the blood and tears. I would want the blood and tears, the other turns me sick. I cannot stand the civilized methods of being savage. Savagery or sanctity I could do with, but from the modern cave man with his morbid and dishonest sensuality may the Good Lord deliver me. I must have God, a God whom I can know, and love, and live for, I must find a meaning for life.

If I am to do that I must think. How does one begin. Well, it begins with trouble in the mind. We have seen that. There is no thought without tears. "Blessed are they that mourn." "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit." The modern cult of cheeriness is largely due to the fact that we are deadly afraid of being sad. We want Easter without Lent. But we cannot have it. The human mind, and the human heart — and you cannot separate the one from the other — God has joined them together and no man can put them asunder.

There's no such thing as thought which does not feel,
If it be real thought, and not thought's ghost
All pale and sicklied o'er with dead conventions,
Abstract truth, which is a lie upon this
Living, loving, suffering Truth which pleads
And pulses in my very veins. The blue
Blood of all beauty and the breath of life itself.

The human mind and the human heart move to truth through trouble. It does not really matter what sort of truth you seek. Bunyan faced with the problem of the soul, and Newton faced with the problem of the stars, are both alike in this; they are troubled spirits. They brood over a mass of apparently unconnected, unrelated, and meaningless facts. Bunyan mutters, "There is no health in me"; Newton mutters, "There is no sense in them." For both it is dark, and they do not know the way. Both walk at times into the dungeon of despair. The pilgrim's progress of the scientist and of the saint is made along much the same road, and it begins with a troubled brooding, and a heavy burden at the back of the heart and mind. We must all start there. Life begins in Lent. But there comes to both a supreme and splendid moment, the moment when they cry, "I see! I see!" Bunyan sees a Cross and a Man who hangs in agony upon it. Newton sees an apple falling to the ground. But into the mind of both there comes a blaze of light. For the scientist it is the formation of a great hypothesis, for the saint it is the vision of a Saviour. But the difference between those two great events is not so wide as many would suppose. They are but two different ways in which the *Word*, the Person eternally expressing a reasonable purpose, reveals himself to the heart and mind of man. For both the scientist and the saint it means the coming of order into chaos. It is the perception of sense in what had been nonsense, of reason in what had seemed mad.

For both, there remains the task of walking in the light which they have seen. The scientist must apply and verify his hypothesis, the saint must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. From the purely intellectual point of view, if there were such a thing in any but abstract questions, such as those with which pure science is concerned, from the purely intellectual point of view our faith is the great hypothesis, and our intellectual right to hold it is the same as that of the scientist to work upon and verify his hypothesis. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of hypotheses to thought. They are the bones of science. There is no science until there is an hypothesis, a great assumption, on its trial; there is no science and no life, either. Thought and life must both begin with an act of faith. Both are born from the great moment in the pilgrim life, when a man cries out, "I see." The full meaning and application of what they see, the extension of their vision until it covers all the facts and gives a meaning

to them, is in both cases the work of a lifetime. As they work new vision comes, and they may perceive that their first vision was not clear, that there is more to learn, and they must modify their early faith.

Religious people often scoff at the scientist because they say he is always changing his faith, and scientific people scoff at the religious because they never change theirs. Neither taunt is really true. It is not true that because Einstein modifies Newton therefore Newton did not see a great Truth, or that because the Darwinian hypothesis of natural selection has been found inadequate that therefore it is not true in essence. Nor is it true that religious people never change or modify their faith, they are always doing it, that is the work of the theologians. St. Augustine and Bishop Gore have both seen Christ, but what they have seen in Christ is as different in many ways as the tropics from the poles.

The Christian does not claim to know God in all the truth of His infinite Being, the claim would be manifestly absurd. Omnia abeunt in mysterium. There are depths of Truth which lie beyond us, and we bow in humility before the "*mysterium tremendum*" of the Father. The cheerful pantheism which is, or claims to be, on intimate and familiar terms with God, which is, so to speak, hail fellow well met with Him; the religion which does not kneel, but presumes on Love revealed in Christ, to treat God almost as an equal, is a dangerous travesty of Truth. It is a reaction from the opposite danger of the unknown and unknowable God before whose veiled face men have bowed down in fear and trembling, placating Him with servile prayers, and propitiating His irrational wrath with morbid sacrifices, and it is as far from truth as most reactions are.

The Christian claim is that God is unknown in the Infinity of the Father, well-known in the Incarnation of the Son, and infinitely knowable by the operation of the Spirit. We do not claim to know God face to face, and in His fulness; but we do claim, and claim emphatically, that through Jesus Christ, we are growing in true knowledge of Him. We do claim that whatever new knowledge of God comes to us, either as a race or as individuals, whether it comes through science or through history, will never contradict Christ. In Christ the meaning of Life is being revealed. We only see things truly as we see them all in Him. His will and His purpose are the will and the purpose of all things, and only as we use all things in accordance with His will, and for His purpose, do we use them rightly. His purpose and not our purposes. His will and not our wills. That is the essential point. If we try to take the world and mould it to our wills, and make it conform to our purposes, it will break us in pieces. It will break our hearts, and burst our brains. The world is not yours—but God's; it is not made to serve your purpose but to serve the purpose of God revealed in Christ.

That is the very essence of the Christian faith. That is the awful truth which we proclaim in the dogma of the Divinity or Deity of

Christ. The reason why we reject, and must reject, the conception of the merely human Jesus, even though he be acknowledged as the greatest of all teachers, is because, if that be true, we are still without light upon the ultimate meaning and purpose of life and of the world in which we live. We have a system of ethics but not a religion, a moral code but not a vital faith. We cannot be saved by a moral code. We can only be saved as we learn to live in accordance with our real environment, like any other living creature. There is no escape from the everlasting law of selection. We must either correspond with our environment or perish, and unless we can know the true nature of our environment we cannot correspond to it. If Christ does not reveal to us the nature of reality we must find someone who does. If the Christian values are not the true values, we must discover what the true values are, or we cannot live. Our supreme hypothesis is that in Christ we have revealed to us the ultimate nature of our environment, the true meaning, value and purpose of life, and we cannot abandon it unless, and until we find a better one.

A great psychologist, Dr. Hadfield, recently expressed a doubt as to whether Christianity was the final religion. If by that he means to question whether Christ as we see Him now, and as we interpret Him now, is the final Christ, I am sure that he is right; but if he means that we shall ever discover Goodness, Beauty, and Truth which contradict the Goodness, Beauty, and Truth revealed in that Life and Death, I am sure he is wrong.

I am convinced that, as through evolution in time, the true nature and meaning of the world in which we live is progressively revealed to us, so it will become more and more evident that we can only live in it as we conform to the Christian standard, and attain to the Christian virtues. God leads us to Christ not only through teachers, preachers, and prophets, but through life and through history. If the coming of the Kingdom of God depended solely upon the moral leaders of mankind, I would despair of it; but the purpose of God revealed in Christ is being worked out in the world, and in the history of the world.

We are being led to the Truth through the continual pressure upon us of our environment, which has *inherent in it* the purpose of God. The doctrine of the "survival of the fittest," adequately interpreted and properly understood, is ultimate truth. The "fittest" means those who most completely fit in with and correspond to their environment. But the ultimate environment of man is God "in Whom we live, and move, and have our being." Those, therefore, are "the fittest," and those alone can in the end survive, who fit in with, are in communion with, God. "This is eternal life to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

The doctrine of the survival of the fittest, which was put forward merely as a bald summary statement of ascertained fact, namely, that those animals tended to survive and propagate their species most

plentifully which were best adapted to their material surroundings, has been used to lend the authority of "science" to the most perverse and ignorantly conceived philosophic ideas. It has been used to interpret human life in terms of animal life, and to depict the world as being in its ultimate nature a brutal battlefield. This teaching it is to which Christianity is utterly and irrevocably opposed. The ultimate nature of the world was revealed to man in Christ as being, not a battlefield, but a home, and its final law as being, not the law of the jungle, but the law of the family.

Let us be quite clear about the importance of that Truth. Once men really grasp the meaning of it, it will turn the world upside down or, rather, right way up. It means that if we try to use the material world as though it belonged to us, to use as we think fit, to serve our will, *every single blessing in it will become a curse*. From that terrible fact there is no escape for us either as individuals or as societies. No intellectual brilliance, or perfection of organization, no human scheming, however subtle, can enable us to subdue the world of things to our human will. We may appear to succeed for a while, but in the end we must fail and fail disastrously. We must fail because "right at the heart of the ultimate reality there was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be a person expressing a rational purpose which we can understand," and it is this purpose which finally controls and determines our destiny because its nature is divine. We cannot know God in His fulness but He has spoken, and is speaking, and revealing to us the meaning of the world in which we live, and only as we learn to hear Him speak, and to obey His will, can we attain to life in any real sense at all. There is no such thing as success outside the will of God, either for individuals or societies.

There is no failure so ghastly as selfish and merely personal success. Whether it be the success of the businessman who gains riches and misses wealth, the success of the man in the street who wins pleasure and loses happiness, of the statesman who attains to power but fails to serve, of the beautiful woman who is universally admired but never loved—it is all failure, ugly, vulgar, piteous failure that makes not only angels, but decent human beings weep. And it is the same with nations. The weakness of the world to-day is the Great Powers. The main reason of its poverty is its apparent wealth. Its success is its supremest failure. It has succeeded in finding the right means to attain the wrong ends. It is in the dark, and has lost its way. And yet there is light, and it grows brighter. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never overpowered it. The purpose and the true value of life are being progressively revealed in Christ, and as we patiently strive to find the meaning of our many-sided complex world in Him, there comes order out of chaos, sense out of nonsense, sanity out of madness.

If we will patiently brood over the tangled, confused, and tragic

maze of facts which make up human history and experience, there will come the moment when we cry, "I see," and there will swim into our vision the master fact of Christ. We shall progressively perceive that He is the door by which we enter into the palace of Truth, as we faithfully apply the great hypothesis to the problems, personal and social, that baffle and perplex us. But we must apply it boldly and universally, we must not allow any part of our lives to remain unexamined and uncriticised in the light of it. The very essence of the hypothesis is in its universality, it either applies to everything or to nothing. If we apply it only to certain sections or departments of life we do not apply it at all. "Now are we the children of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be—but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." God has spoken and is speaking, and though His *Word* does not reveal the whole of His infinite Mind, yet He is Truth; and as we apply and act upon the Truth we have, we gain more and more, until at last we come to know even as we are known. This is the Christian Faith.

Since so it is, and in that face for me,
The final beauty burns to birth,
And all things fair in heaven and earth
Are summed and centred in a mystery
Of Loveliness
Beyond compare,
How could my soul do less
Than worship Him as Saviour and as God!
Dim though my vision be
Yet that faint gleam my faith can see,
Of Christ, is brighter than the sun,
Without it all the world is bare
And barren as a winter's day,
Whose cold grey
Hours run,
From dark to dark,
Without a dawn or sunset sky
To tell the Truth that Love is there
Through all.
Without it pleasures fade and fall,
As petals from a rotting rose,
To leave the thorns behind;
Without it I am blind,
And, through a wilderness of woes,
Go blindly blundering on to death,
And nothingness at last,
Which is damnation of the soul.

THE ESCAPE FROM DEPRESSION

EASTER is always popular; but Lent is not. Everybody keeps Christmas, but very few people think of Advent. People love festivals, but they rather shrink from fasts. In fact, there would be many would say that fasts had better pass out of fashion because they are morbid. They bid people mourn, and the great thing in the world is to be cheerful. They call people to sorrow when what the world really wants is joy, and therefore the old medieval Christians who prayed on their knees night by night that they might die a good death were morbid people. The best thing is not to think of death, and the people who poured out confession for their sins were morbid people; the best thing is not to worry about your sins, and the people that mourned for the sorrows of the world were morbid people; the best thing is not to bother about the sorrow of the world. But, you know, a great deal of that is cowardice, and is more morbid rather than less. We do not want to think about death because it seems to be the end of all things; because we are trying to forget it and live as though we were going to live in this world for ever. Yet nothing is worse than not to face facts, and the old people who were so familiar with death that they did not mind praying night by night that they might die a good death were probably more wholesome-minded than the people who refuse to look at it because it frightens them out of their wits. Perhaps they felt the dawn of another day so warm through it, and saw it so clearly breaking through the darkness, that to them death was just the portal of everlasting life. And perhaps they mourned about their sins because they knew there was pardon for their sins, and mourned about the sorrow of the world because they knew there was healing for that sorrow to be found.

And yet it is impossible to withhold sympathy from those who are afraid of anything that may depress them, because the world is a depressing place; and I should not be surprised if for a large number of you to whom I am speaking to-night the battle of life was more largely a battle with depression, a battle with despair. Someone said the other day, "You Christians are always singing hymns, and I suppose they must all be about the hereafter and heaven, for I don't see anything on earth to sing hymns about." And after one has been through an East End Mission, and sat for days listening to the sorrows of human life, the impression that one is left with is twofold—one doesn't know whether to be most troubled about the world's sorrow or about the world's sin; about the amount of unhappiness that there is

in the world or the amount of wrong-doing. Sometimes I say and sometimes I feel that I am more surprised at how good people are than how wicked they are, and on the whole that is true; yet there is an awful lot of wickedness in the world—I mean avoidable wickedness, avoidable cruelty, and avoidable selfishness, avoidable wounding of our fellows, and a great deal of the sorrow that comes is partly due to that. At any rate, one gets the impression that there are an enormous number of people who, behind a smiling face, more or less, carry a very heavy heart.

Nor is that altogether among the old. Youth is supposed to be, of course, all joy, but I wonder very much about that, about that time of your life when new strange passions are growing up in you, and your inner being is filled with longings that you do not understand; when you feel intensely and very deeply, and when your first disappointment feels as if it would never be over, and there could never be any brightness again. After all, after you have had a certain amount of knocking about, and have had the desire of your eyes cut from you once or twice, and the thing you set your heart on has failed you two or three times, you begin to know that after winter cometh summer, and after night the day returns, and after the tempest there is a great calm. You begin to know that sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning; that the moors are going to be purple again, that the sun will shine. But in your early troubles it seems like the end of all things. Sometimes I think elder people don't understand how very terrible and devastating the sorrows of the young can be. I daresay you feel that nothing gives you a lump in the throat like the sorrow of a child, even though you know it will pass soon. But a child does forget quickly; young people do not always forget quickly; the wound may go very deep, and it may be very hard for them to believe that there is any light coming at all. And among the young and among the old there is a tremendous lot of depression, and of sin due to depression.

People do wrong because they want to do something to liven life up, something that stings and burns; life seems so dull when they are depressed that they break out often and do wrong because they can not stand being burdened and depressed any longer. They are often driven into sin by sheer boredom and depression of mind. It seems a terrible thing then to call them to a fast, to call the depressed to mourn and repent, and to call them to contemplate a broken, bleeding, battered figure hanging upon the cross as their God. What they want is something cheerful, something bright, something that will really hearten them up. . . .

Well, then, I wonder is the Church wiser, after all? What she asks you to do is to go down to the root of your sorrow, down to the root of your depression, and find out what it is, in order that you may find God's joy. Because Lent is a preparation for Easter, and it is always in order that you may know the joy of Christ and the power of his

resurrection that you are called upon to fast. You are only called upon to mourn that you may rejoice, and to die that you may live. And it may be worth while to go down to the very roots and find out what the real source of your sorrow is, in order that it may be lifted from you, or that you may receive strength to bear it.

There are some depressions and sorrows which are partly temperamental. I think on the whole the greatest inequality of life is the way different temperaments are served out. There are some people who are temperamentally depressed; they are afraid, they are sensitive, they are easily hurt; they treasure up in their minds things that an ordinary healthy person would forget, and they will go worrying their poor old heads about things that an ordinary person would never think about at all. Sometimes people have come to me, and I have discovered afterwards that for about a month they have been afraid they have offended me. You can not offend me, I don't think it is possible. One poor old man I found had gone about for three weeks, treasuring up in his heart something he thought had offended me which I had never thought of at all; he had gone to bed with it boiling in his head, and it took him three weeks before he came and told me. He was just one of those people who are temperamentally depressed, and it is a tremendous handicap and burden. It would do men and women who are that way inclined a great deal of good to talk with somebody who could sympathize and understand and perhaps help them. It may be partly hereditary, partly their bringing up. I think it is partly, but more often an inheritance of up-bringing, a burden laid upon you as a child. And it is perhaps the heaviest burden you are called upon to bear; yet you may have to bear it, and to recognize the source and reason for it, and go back and understand why it is you are like that; to see that it is temperamental is half the battle in overcoming it. Because what you are prone to do is to lay upon the poor old world and upon your friends and upon God what is really due to yourself. I don't mean to say it is altogether your fault; it is hard to see how it is your fault, but you are prone to lay it upon the outside world when it really is your own. It is really not the old world that is so dreadfully hard; it is you who are not quite fit to face the world, and what Lent asks you to do is to get down to the root and not to go on with your burden unrelieved; try to get to the root of it and face it out.

But an enormous amount of sorrow and depression is not due to temperamental inheritance; it is due to a whole variety of causes, and one of the commonest is that you are being sorry for yourself. Now, you know, that is not a bit of use, and it will only bring you more misery in the end. It is no earthly good being sorry for yourself, and the sooner you get lifted out of it the better. You are just pitying yourself, and thinking how hardly done by you are; how different from other people. As a matter of fact, you are not a bit different. All people have got something, and you are just pitying yourself; that is the root of God

knows how much sorrow, and deep down it is due to pride; I mean, it is due to the fact that you think this world was made for your special delectation and entertainment. You know it was not for your special enjoyment, and if you center the world around yourself and really only see it as meant for you, and you see your friends only as they minister to you, when they fail you get awfully depressed. You make a picture of yourself as being a certain sort of person, and then when that picture breaks down, you are brokenhearted. You picture yourself as being very charming and engaging, and it doesn't work, because it is not true. Or you imagine yourself being great shakes at something, and find you are not, then you break down. You have a picture of yourself which is not true and you are trying to center the world about yourself. It is no good, because it won't center round you; that is not where its center is; its center is round God. What Lent asks you to do is to get right down to the very depths, to get rid of pride, and no longer to see things as ministering only to you, and persons only as they affect you, but to look at them through the eyes of God and see God as the center of the world, and the world as Christ's great battlefield, and so to forget yourself and your own pride. Then a great deal of that sorrow and depression goes. Mind you, you are an awful liar to yourself, you know that, don't you? You play-act to yourself all the time; you are always at it, spinning yarns about yourself that aren't true; and you are the easiest person to deceive on God's earth. You deceive yourself much quicker than you deceive your neighbors, and that is the worst of it.

Those false pictures and ideas you have got of what you deserve and what you ought to receive and what you have a right to, are the cause of any quantity of depression and misery. If you could stop presenting at the bank of life checks that can not be honored because you have not got an account, it would help you a great deal. Start presenting them to God instead. You present them on your own account as if you deserved them, deserved so much respect and consideration and success and achievement, and so much love and affection and admiration. In point of fact you don't deserve any of it, and if you get any you ought to be jolly thankful. But you think you deserve it, and when you don't get it you are depressed, downhearted, and sad. And of course, you won't give that as the cause to yourself until you think over things very honestly indeed. And when you get into contact with something invigorating, with Christ and his kingdom, all that tends to become very small, and you become humble, and if you become humble, that is half the way to abolishing sorrow of the wrong sort.

Or again depression may be due to a habit that you know you ought to give up, and you have failed; you have given up trying. You have tried to stop thinking about it; have run it away to a corner, and it keeps bobbing up and worrying you. It comes between you and peace. When you look at people you don't feel they really know you, and you

say within yourself, if they only knew me they would not love me. There are two things about that. If you really knew me you would not love me, at first; because I am a queer fish inside, too; and so are all of you, I guess. People sometimes say, Here is a body of dull, respectable people. But you are not dull, and not really respectable. If you were to write down your secret hopes and fears and dreams and longings, it would be a most extraordinary record. It would not be at all surprising if one of you respectable persons came and said you had often had an impulse to murder your mother. If you are only going to love people when they are what you call "nice," you are only going to love their services, because people are not nice, not inside; they are kind of queer. If you love them, you have got to love them as God loves them, seeing them all right deep down. And the first thing you have to grasp is that you are not alone in having the sin to struggle against; not alone in having a thing that is ugly and really nasty. Some extraordinarily beautiful characters have a nasty vein, a beastly vein, in them, against which they always have to struggle all the time. A great saint may have a beastly temper; he comes out and says brutal things, and is bitterly sorry afterwards. One of my dearest and most beloved friends, a very saint of God, has the temper of the devil. He has done wonders with it, but it is still there. He removes the furniture when things go wrong, and yet there is the whole glory of God in him too. And of course, if you knew him you could say he was an angel until you had seen him in a rage; then you would know he was a man, and a very dear man too. We all have nasty streaks. But for God's sake don't give in; don't go and try to forget it and say it doesn't matter. It does matter. It matters awfully. Sin is against the law of your nature. You can not break the law of your nature without suffering for it, going on suffering for it, and going on. Lent asks you to get rid of the beastly thing now and begin again; to cast it off, to face it before God. If you can not get peace by yourself, go to a priest you can trust and confess it there. It may be, due to that, your sorrow would lift and your depression would lift, if you could once become master of that, so that you knew you had it under your thumb. Lent calls you to begin again.

Or perhaps your depression may be due to a wrong you have done and you could undo, and you have never had the courage, because it would mean that you would be humiliated if you did. Well, Lent says, Go and do it quickly, even if it means you have to eat the dust. Undo the wrong, as far as it can be undone. If you have wronged a person, go and say so to him; say it to God and say it to him. Undo it. There is no joy like the joy of undoing a wrong and knowing you are right with God and right with your fellow men. To that Lent calls you.

And sorrow may be due, too, to the fact that you have a hatred of somebody and you won't let it go; there is somebody you won't forgive, somebody you are bearing a grudge against; and you have a rightful grudge; they did wrong to you really, and you were perfectly in the

right, and you are not going to forgive until they say they are sorry, and you are not going to love them and pray for them, or have anything to do with them until they say they are sorry; you don't like them, and when anybody talks about them you get a glint in your eye, very much like a wolf has when he is going to tear his prey. Nice refined ladies get it in their eyes. No matter how refined you are, you have to get rid of that beastly side of your nature; and women are worse haters than men, more bitter, more almost animal. I have seen beautiful refined ladies with a light like an animal in their eyes. Well, that is poison, literally, physically, poison. Hatred poisons the blood. If you treasure it, it poisons your body. That is not fancy, it is fact. It alters the constitution of your blood. And it does depress. Of course, you say you have a right to the hatred. Well, and you are a Christian. He had a right to hate the men that drove the nails into his hands and feet, a perfect right, and all he said was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." No Christian has a right to hate. You can not really forgive until the other person says he is sorry? You can not make it up, you can not restore your communion? There is no excuse for shutting off forgiveness from your side. If God had waited until you were sorry you probably would never have been forgiven. But he has loved you all the time. If I had to wait until I was worthy to be forgiven by God I should have to wait till long after it was time for me to go to heaven, because I never should be worthy. If I do get to heaven it will only be by the back door; I am never going to be properly fit. I shall only get there just because he is very good and kind, while I am a great way off he has compassion and runs and falls on my neck and kisses me. If you are going to judge people by that standard you can not forgive too soon. That is what Lent calls you to.

Then, lastly, depression may be due, especially with those that are delicate or growing old, to the fear of death. More people have it than confess it. They do not want to die, they don't want to give up, and they won't look at it. What Lent calls you to is to face it out, look it straight in the face, look through it and face God. And after all, the whole thing depends on that, because if you look right through this sorrow that is born of self, you find God and the joy of Christ in his resurrection, and then you can not only bear those sorrows that you now bear, and bear them easily, but you can take on the sorrow of the world and help to bear that too; you can then go and face sickness and poverty without fear of being depressed and cast down; you can go and weep with those that weep without fearing that you would altogether despair, because you would have found the joy of which the sorrow of the world is born. There are two sides to a crucifix; you can look upon that manly figure, and cry, "Go and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow," or you can look at the heart of him who hangs upon it, and cry, "Go and see if there be any joy like unto his joy," by the power of which that sorrow was born. And if you get into the joy of

Christ you can bear your burdens and somebody else's on top, and still not faint. And that is how you are meant to be. You are called so that you may so live; you are called to live so that you have so firm a hold on the very joy and power of Christ and of the love of God that you can not only bear the burdens that life lays on you, but you can take on some other people's and bear them, because the yoke is easy, and you find the burden light. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." You know what the metaphor in that is, about the yoke. It is a picture of an ox or horse struggling up a hill with the yoke or the collar badly fitted to his neck; and as he pulls it chafes and hurts him; every time he pulls it wounds. Someone comes up who understands the horse and just fits the collar, readjusts the yoke, and makes it easy on his neck. Then his great old muscles go and the load begins to roll forward easily; because the yoke is easy therefore the burden is light. It is just that way with the burden of life. As a great psychologist said, If a man is right with life, he can stand almost anything; if he is wrong, it may be too big a burden to bear. And if you are right with God, and have the peace of God in your heart, it will take a lot to break you and burden you down. If you are wrong with him, and the yoke is not easy, and every little load jars and hurts your shoulder and makes your heart bleed, then the lightest burden in life will be too heavy for you; you won't be able to bear it at all. But Lent calls you to fit the yoke of Christ, that is the real yoke of your soul, and to make it easy; to find his humility and his loneliness and so to find rest within your souls; so that the whole force of your life goes to the bearing of life's burden, and it rolls forward, and you find it light.

So it is that your own sorrows roll away; you come to stand with him on Easter morning outside the empty tomb, in the Garden of Lilies, and hear him cry across the world, "Behold I am alive for evermore, and hold the keys of death and hell." For life may have a face as grim as the Garden of Gethsemane, yet has it a heart as tender as his.

THE CHURCH IN POLITICS: A DEFENSE

THERE is, and there must be, a plane upon which we can think and reason together upon questions arising out of our wider human relations, social questions, that is, apart from and above party prejudice and sectional interest. If that is not so, and there is no such plane, and we can not think of these big questions outside the prejudices and passions that arise in party strife, then it is safe to assert that there will never be any solution of the problems whatsoever. The idea that politics in the true sense—that is, the art of managing our human relationships on a large scale—must remain a separate department of life, distinct from morals and religion, is ultimately irrational and absurd, and is an idea with which no responsible teacher ought to have anything to do. We have a right to demand of educated and responsible critics who earn their living and are paid to help people to think and act rightly that they should be scrupulously careful in what they say and use terms carefully defined. . . .

One of the great public and religious dangers of the day is the use of the two words socialism and capitalism without any real attempt to define their meaning. We are always meeting with and criticizing it in our work in the country. One expects it, of course, of thoughtless and careless talkers, but one ought not to get it in the speeches of responsible teachers. I do not know how many times men have asked me if I was a socialist, and I have always said the same thing: "What precisely do you mean?" Then they ask me: "Are you for the nationalization of mines?" And again I say, "And what precisely do you mean?" Nationalization means what any measure of nationalization is when its details are set forth. If you mean, do I think there is anything peculiarly righteous or Christian in a nationalized system of mines, I say no; it is entirely a matter of what it produces. But so far as I can remember I have never been guilty of using and slinging about those words and kindred words without very carefully considering what precisely they mean, and I would regard it as a betrayal of people so to do. It is a public danger to do so, because it tends to inflame passions and perpetuate prejudices which are definitely antisocial and anti-Christian, and tends to make the tremendous task with which our beloved country and all European countries are faced, almost impossible of accomplishment. I, therefore, think it is wrong and rep-

Reprinted from *Homiletic Review* 91 (Jan.-June 1926): 53-57. Used by permission of *The Sermon Builder*, Church Extension Service, Golden, Colorado. This sermon was preached at the annual service of the Industrial Christian Fellowship in St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London.

rehensible when responsible teachers use phrases such as "sloppy socialism," and going into politics, and securing hired advocates, without very careful definition of their terms. It is, moreover, perfectly necessary that we who are non-producers in the material sense of the word should be perfectly honest about our position. We live at the expense of the workers of the country and of the world, and are fed, clothed, and housed, and our children are maintained by them. We partake of their carnal things in order that we may impart to them spiritual and mental things. It is, therefore, quite impossible for us to escape the problems that our relations with them impose upon us. Here am I, wearing boots and clothes, and warming my hands at fires, and eating food that is cooked by people who have to sweat and work, and I am related to them, and I can not get away from them, no matter how I try, unless I jump out of my skin or go about naked, and the police would not allow that. I am simply condemned to it. I have got to sit up one with these people, and I can not escape my relations to them, and it is with those relations that in their larger and wider sense politics are inevitably concerned. It is undoubted and indisputable that there is no warrant in the gospel for the idea that salvation can be attained by the individual soul by the solitary contemplation of and worship of God. That is a method of attaining salvation which is taught by various Eastern religions, but is distinctly not Christian. The two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," are never separated by our Lord. They are in his mind and in the mind of all New Testament teachers without exception an essential unity. That is merely to say that Christianity is and always has been an ethical religion, which offers salvation through a right relation to God in the first place, and a right relation to our brother men, and all our brother men, in the second place. Our Lord specifically and carefully refuses to confine the definition of our neighbor to those of the same family or the same race with ourselves. In the parable of the Good Samaritan he lays it down that the love of our neighbor must stand above the bitterest national antagonism.

Because the critics of the Industrial Christian Fellowship and myself, like all other men, live through and on the labor of our neighbors, and are fed, clothed, and housed by them, we can not remain Christian without pondering over and endeavoring to adjust our relations to them and their relations to one another in the light of the Christian gospel or good news. It is inaccurate and untrue to say that the gospel was good news and not good advice. Our Lord's teaching teems with good advice, and so does that of every New Testament writer without exception, even the revelation of St. John the Divine. The gospel is good advice based upon good news. The type of Christian teaching is a Pauline epistle which always proclaims the good news of

the love of God first and the redemption through Jesus Christ, and then, with that tremendous "therefore" which is the distinctive mark of Christian teaching—"Therefore, because ye are the sons of God," "Therefore, because ye are redeemed by Christ," therefore, your relations as husband to wife, as parent to child, as master to slave, as Jew to Gentile, must be of a certain kind. First, the good news, then the good advice based on the good news. It is therefore inaccurate, untrue, careless, and reprehensible teaching to say that the gospel is good news and not good advice. There is a sense in which economics and politics are and must ever remain branches of ethics, ethics being the science of conduct, and it is inaccurate thinking and bad teaching to lose sight of that fact. It is perfectly true that it was much easier to teach economics and politics purely and simply as branches of ethics in the Middle Ages, when they were purely a branch of moral theology. If you want to know about the economic teaching of the Middle Ages you have to forage it out of the moral theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas. There was no separate science of economics as there is now. It was regarded purely as a branch of morality. That was easier then than it is now, and the disastrous separation between economics and morals which has taken place is partly inevitable because of the increasing complexity and extent of the human relations involved in political and economic questions. But it is quite impossible to maintain that the separation is right or should continue, unless you are prepared to suggest that the Christian ethic does not operate outside the bounds of the home, and that charity not only begins at home but ends there. There is a peculiarly moving and touching passage in the dean of St. Paul's *Confessio Fidei*. In that passage he says: "For my own part, the sweet sanctities of home life, and above all the innocence of little children, bring me nearer to the presence of God." I heartily agree with that, but what about the sweet sanctities of homes in Southwark and in the mining villages and the innocence of little children who sleep ten in a room? Can you really enjoy the glory of your own children, and not be concerned with these other things? Neither morally nor intellectually would that be respectable teaching.

I sympathize with all those who are uncomfortable about their position, and not quite sure whether they honestly earn their living; I am not sure whether I earn mine; and I can understand the desire not to think about it too much in the light of Christian ethics; it is liable to be disturbing and uncomfortable, but, however uncomfortable it is, it is our manifest and obvious Christian duty. "This is a true saying and worthy by all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners." The Church's duty always remains primarily the salvation of the individual, and it is impossible for us to define what is meant by salvation short of the beatific vision; but what we do know and can be certain of is that salvation begins, first of all,

by getting a right relation to God, and, secondly, and depending upon that, a right relation to our fellowmen. The idea of an isolated individual holding communion with God apart from relations to his fellowmen is both a practical impossibility and a philosophic absurdity, which no responsible teacher ought to have any truck with whatsoever. An individual man is and ought to be something more than his human relationships, because he ought to have a relationship with God and the Eternal and the Infinite; but his human relationships are and must necessarily be a very large part of him, and it is not possible to redeem that individual unless you redeem those relationships. It is not only that a man works in a factory, it is not only that a man is in a nation, but that the nation is in him, it is not only that a man is in England, but that England is in him, and is a very large part of him. If those relations are wrong, then the man is wrong. It is not only that a man is in business, but the business is in the man. An Indian native is a member of a caste, and it is not only that he is in the caste, it is that the caste relation is in him, and it is very often the hardest part of him to bring over to Christ. Very often the business in a man is the hardest thing in the world to bring over and reconcile with Christ. You can not save the individual from his business, you have got to save him through it. He can be redeemed only as a member of society, and immediately he is so redeemed the burden of setting right his human relationships is laid upon him.

That is the meaning of bearing the cross. As soon as I say, Christ is my Savior, and as soon as I see him in the world, and the world in him, which is the meaning of conversion, at that moment do I become acutely conscious of the injustice, cruelty, and oppression involved in my relationships, as a white man to colored men, as a comparatively strong man, in the sense of being able to affect my environment, to comparatively weak men, and as, by inheritance, a comparatively fortunate man to comparatively unfortunate men. I can not help that, as soon as ever I see Christ as my Savior, immediately the sense of the injustice and cruelty of human relationships is laid upon me as a burden, and I can not be redeemed unless I set about remedying it. As long as my vision of Christ the Savior remains clear, that is, so long as I live in Christ, it is impossible for me to rest unless I am constantly thinking and working to the end that the injustice and cruelty and tyranny of human relationships may be abolished. It is that utter necessity which is the driving force behind the work of the I.C.F. and Copec. We strive, to quote the bishop of Durham's charge, to show how the truth about God casts light on the world's great problems, and points the way of duty, and we strive because the love of Christ constrains us to strive, and because we can not help it. We believe that wherever the Christian conscience is really awakened by the Christian vision that that strife is inevitable, and that any attempt to prevent it has as much chance of success as a small kitten would have of up-

setting St. Paul's Cathedral by rubbing itself against one of the shaky pillars.

The immensity of the task makes it natural that we should seek to escape from it. It deprives us of our comfort, and disturbs our self-esteem, because it brings a thousand dangers in its train. We do owe a debt of gratitude to our critics in so far as they point out those dangers; they are right when they tell us that there can be no reform without redemption. God knows how many times we have said that in the open air and in hall and at street corners and outside pubs and in every corner of the world. The bishop of Durham points it out to me as if I had never thought of it in my life, as if I was not teaching it day in and day out, down in the docks and everywhere, plugging it into people that there is no reform possible without new life from God. What else does he suppose the message is? Of course, they are right when they tell us that it is vain to expect an advocacy of any political or economic program, or that support of a political party can be fulfilling the mighty task to which the Church is called. They are right when they warn us against the danger of belief in the natural goodness of man, and the idea that if you reform his institutions and alter his methods of government he will blossom into brotherhood as the flowers in the spring.

But, God bless my life, I am always saying that, never stop saying it. I wonder do they really think that we are so idiotic about the ordinary man as to think he is an angel or to neglect warning him. We are always saying and teaching that you can not blossom into anything except bloodshed and murder, that it is only as you are born again from above that the real things can come. Nevertheless, the warning is just and right, and anybody who preaches the social gospel in a way that leads people to suppose that it needs less personal consecration and less personal religion is doing a grave injury to people's minds. It means more, not less, more self-sacrifice in pursuit of personal communion with God, than the old individualist idea of salvation could possibly demand. They are right when they warn us of the danger of the gospel of salvation by uplift, and the formation of mutual approval societies wherein I agree to call my neighbor a good fellow provided he will also call me a good fellow, when as a matter of fact we both ought to get down on our knees and say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

But, once again, we are always insisting on that. There is no good whatever in people supposing that popular preaching and beautiful speeches can kind of waft them into the kingdom of heaven, and that they are going to get it by spiritual uplift. Only by hard spiritual work and devotion, and careful balanced thought and devotion to the really highest and best, can these things be thought out and wrought out. They are right when they point to the need of repentance, but they are wrong when they bid us forget that the motive of repentance is that the kingdom of God is at hand, the great eternal fellowship of the Spirit is at hand, and can be wrought out, and that the life has got to

be worked out in our lives here. They are right when they point us to the fact that men are eager to use Christ for their own purpose, that just as the nationalists and revolutionaries and conservatives of his own day clawed at him and tried to drag him in as the instrument of their schemes, and then when they found he could not be used by them threw him away, so the Labor movement, the Conservatives, the pacifists, the imperialists, and all the other ists and isms would like to get hold of Christ and use him for their purposes. He must not so be used and can not so be used; and I am sick to death of saying this. It is true that if the Church falls into the hands of any section or party, it will be crucified, and not crucified with Christ, but crucified with the thief who suffered justly as the due reward of his sins. Christ must not and can not be used for merely temporal ends. They are right again when they tell us that the gospel is other-worldly, and that it bids us sit lightly to material things, using them always as means and not as ends, and as only valuable for the purpose of the Giver. But they are wrong and utterly wrong when they bid us postpone salvation altogether to the other world, and regard this world as unimportant. That is not a Christian motive. To Christ there were not two worlds, there was only one, and that God's world; and that world is one and we are one with all that are on this earth and with all that are in the world beyond.

The Christian faith has done battle all down the ages with every form of Manichaeism, the deadly heresy which taught that the material and spiritual were opposed, as evil and good. The Christian faith knows nothing of the purely spiritual and nothing of the purely material; it knows only the sacramental. Salvation begins here on earth and must be wrought out with fear and trembling in the sphere of our present human relationships, wrought out through our daily work, our trade, our commerce, our finance, through the use and abuse of our money, through the use and abuse of our money rights, of our property, of our property rights; and there has never been any other idea in truly Christian teaching but that that must be so. It is not respectable Christian teaching to deny that Christianity enters into the very heart of these things. Our salvation must be wrought out in a unity which extends in an infinite complexity of relationships, not only over the whole extent of human life in this world, but in those unknown spheres of the universe where dwell the waiting spirits of those who lived, sinned and repented, strove, suffered and died, that we might stand where they now stand, and see what now they see. The salvation we work out with bleeding hands, and in the common things of every day, has its foundation here, but its topmost towers reach up into a land beyond our powers of mortal vision to behold, and yet a land that is one with this land. No teaching of the Reformation did so much harm—and some teaching of the Reformation did harm—as the separation of this world from the next, the separation of the great

Church here, militant and expectant, and the triumphant Church beyond. The world is one eternal world, and we have got to work out part of it here on earth in our common relations. The Industrial Christian Fellowship is but a little thing, but it is a constituent part, and I am fairly convinced an absolutely necessary part of the greatest thing in the world, which is the Church of the living Christ. Her task is the historic task of the Church in all ages. What we teach is no difference in essence from what the Church has always taught, only applied to wider and wider spheres. Our task is the historic task of the Church in all ages. Our purpose is the purpose of our Lord, our method is the method of the prophets, and our only strength is in his grace.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY:

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E. STANLEY JONES

1884-



E. STANLEY JONES, photograph, courtesy of Methodist Prints.

ELI STANLEY JONES

1884	<i>Born January 3 in Clarksville, Maryland</i>
1901	<i>Experienced meaningful conversion</i>
1907	<i>Graduated from Asbury College; began work as missionary evangelist in India</i>
1911	<i>Married Mabel Lossing</i>
1914	<i>Suffered serious illness in India</i>
1928	<i>Elected bishop of the Methodist Episcopal church and resigned twenty-four hours later</i>
1929	<i>Developed Ashram (religious retreat) at Sat Tal, India</i>
1948	<i>Wrote Mahatma Gandhi: An Interpretation</i>
1968	<i>Wrote spiritual autobiography, A Song of Ascents</i>

ONE of the most famous missionaries of modern times, E. Stanley Jones has served not only India but the world. His one consuming passion is to share the person of Jesus Christ. In his autobiography he wrote, "Christ has been, and is, to me the Event. Everything started with him," and "When it comes to Jesus Christ, there are no apologies upon my lips, for there are none in my heart."¹

LIFE AND TIMES

Born on January 3, 1884, in Clarksville, Maryland, the future missionary to India grew up in a poor, devout, conservative Methodist home. Economic insecurity dogged his early years. Part of his later criticism of the capitalist system undoubtedly originated in these boyhood experiences. He saw his father, unable to find employment, deteriorate day by day. One of his

1. E. Stanley Jones, *A Song of Ascents: A Spiritual Autobiography*, pp. 16, 19. Copyright © 1968 by Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

most vivid memories of his mother is hearing her pray, "O God, help me to hold my family together through all this."²

His religious experiences as a young man were profound. Jones vividly describes his conversion as a seventeen-year-old boy:

An evangelist, Robert J. Bateman, came to Memorial Church. Through his rough exterior I saw there was reality within. He was a converted alcoholic, on fire with God's love. I said to myself, "I want what he has." This time I was deadly serious. I was not to be put off by catch phrases and slogans. I wanted the real thing or nothing. No halfway houses for me; I wanted my home. For three days I sought. During those three days I went to the altar twice. On one of those times my beloved teacher, Miss Nellie Logan, knelt alongside me and repeated John 3:16 this way: "God so loved Stanley Jones, that he gave his only begotten Son, that if Stanley Jones will believe on him he shall not perish, but have everlasting life." I repeated it after her, but no spark of assurance kindled my darkened heart. The third night came; before going to the meeting I knelt beside my bed and prayed the sincerest prayer I had prayed so far in my life. My whole life was behind that simple prayer: "O Jesus, save me tonight." And he did! A ray of light pierced my darkness. Hope sprang up in my heart. I found myself saying, "He's going to do it." I now believe he had done it, but I had been taught that you found him at an altar of prayer. So I felt I must get to the church to an altar of prayer.

I found myself running the mile to the church. The eagerness of my soul got into my body. I was like Christian running from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. I went into the church and took the front seat, a thing I had never done before. But I was all eagerness for the evangelist to stop speaking, so I could get to that altar of prayer. When he did stop, I was the first one there. I had scarcely bent my knees when Heaven broke into my spirit. I was enveloped by assurance, by acceptance, by reconciliation. I grabbed the man next to me by the shoulder and said: "I've got it." "Got it?" What did I mean? I see now it was not an "it": it was a him. I had him—Jesus—and he had me. We had each other. I belonged. My estrangement, my sense of orphanage were

2. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

gone. I was reconciled. As I rose from my knees, I felt I wanted to put my arms around the world and share this with everybody. Little did I dream at that moment that I would spend the rest of my life literally trying to put my arms around the world to share this with everybody. But I have. This was a seed moment. The whole of my future was packed into it.³

He immediately began to lead others, including his eighty-two-year-old grandmother, to Christ.

About a year later he had an experience of deeper consecration, which he described as a filling of the Holy Spirit:

I closed the book, dropped on my knees beside my bed, and said: "Now, Lord, what shall I do?" And he replied: "Will you give me your all?" And after a moment's hesitation I replied: "Yes, Lord, of course I will. I will give you my all, all I know and all I don't know." Then he replied: "Then take my all, take the Holy Spirit." I paused for a moment: my all for his all; my all was myself, his all was himself, the Holy Spirit. I saw as in a flash the offer. I eagerly replied: "I will take the Holy Spirit." I arose from my knees, with no evidence, save his word. I walked out on the naked promise of that Word. His character was behind that Word. I could trust him with my all and I could trust him to give me his all. I walked around the room repeating my acceptance. The doubts began to close in on me. I did what Abraham did when the birds came to scatter his sacrifice—he shoed them away. I walked around the room pushing away with my hands the menacing doubts. When suddenly I was filled—filled with the Holy Spirit. Wave after wave of the Spirit seemed to be going through me as a cleansing fire. I could only walk the floor with the tears of joy flowing down my cheeks. I could do nothing but praise him—and did. I knew this was no passing emotion; the Holy Spirit had come to abide with me forever.⁴

He then felt that he should drop the study of law which he was pursuing and go into the Christian ministry. He entered Asbury College for training. There he received his basic college degrees. He did not pursue doctoral study, though he did earn a

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

master's degree. Later Duke University and Syracuse University granted him honorary doctorates.

At Asbury College on one occasion he was to give a talk on missions. He prayed that God would give him one missionary as a result of the message. God answered the prayer by giving *him* a personal call to be a missionary. In a sense, he was his own answer to prayer. Jones journeyed to India to serve as a missionary evangelist to the upper castes. He threw himself into the work with unflagging zeal. As a result, his health broke several times. After eight years of busy missionary service and several nervous collapses, deep depression set in. While he prayed, a voice seemed to say, "If you will turn that over to me and not worry about it, I will take care of it." Jones quickly answered, "Lord, I close the bargain right here."⁵ His own testimony was that life abundant took possession of him.

The living Christ is very real to E. Stanley Jones. He feels his basic call is to present Jesus as alive in our world. As a result, he has often been criticized for not stressing enough the doctrines of the Atonement through the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Jones is convinced that the living Christ will mold any culture; therefore, he was not interested in transporting American Christianity to India. Rather his emphasis was to present the living Christ who would mold India into a unique type of Christian culture. Because of this concept, he has been described as liberal in his doctrine.

His mystical experiences and his awareness of a living Christ cause him to believe strongly in what he calls "the inner voice." He depends on that voice in every crisis. According to his own testimony, "It has always been right. It has never let me down."⁶

For his day he had a rather unique approach to missions. He believed that he had a responsibility not only to teach but also to learn. He said of this approach, "I had come to India with everything to teach and nothing to learn. I stay to learn as well, and I believe I am a better man for having come into contact with the gentle heart of the East."⁷ He initiated a series of round-table conferences in which Christians and non-Christians shared their religious experiences. He believed that there was

5. E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1925), pp. 19-20.

6. E. Stanley Jones, *Along the Indian Road* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1939), p. 215.

7. Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, p. 222.

much to learn from the other religions, and he came to appreciate the insights of others.

These confrontations with the religion of India caused waves of doubt to break over his own religious experience. In the struggle to deal with these doubts, he came to feel that he must present Christ and not Christianity. He realized that much of what he had called the Christian faith was really its cultural trappings rather than a vital relation to the person of Jesus Christ. In his writings he often refers to this purified insight into the Christian faith. In *The Christ of the Mount* he wrote:

Among the many things which India has taught me are two outstanding: First, she compelled me to disentangle Christ from the accretions which the centuries had gathered around him. It was a liberating experience to find one's faith becoming simplified and centered in a Person. . . . So India has taught me the second thing: the main moral content in the word "Christian" must be the Sermon on the Mount.⁸

In his popular book *The Christ of the Indian Road* he stated:

Christianity must be defined as Christ, not the Old Testament, not Western civilization, not even the system built around him in the West, but Christ himself and to be a Christian is to follow him. Christ must be interpreted in terms of Christian experience rather than through mere argument. . . . Christ must be in an Indian setting. It must be the Christ of the Indian Road.⁹

Yet Jones realized that most people are unable to distinguish cultural religion from the real thing. Therefore he pled with the West in general and with America in particular to make their culture Christian. He felt that to do so would help immeasurably to advance the cause of Christ in missions. He saw much in Western civilization that was not only *un-Christian* but *anti-Christian*. Racism, materialism, war, moral corruption—all of these Jones insisted were a detriment to the advance of missions.

In many ways his appeals for a Christian culture had the

8. E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Mount* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1931), p. 11.

9. Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, pp. 26-27.

ring of social gospel idealism. Reinhold Niebuhr referred to Jones's book, *Christ's Alternative to Communism*, as the most perfect swan song of liberal politics. In his writings Jones reveals many of the traits of the idealism of the social gospel: a belief in the perfectibility of man, a desire to see the principles of Jesus applied to the economic and political realms of society, the idealistic approach to the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth within the present historical order, and a tendency to interpret the Bible in a way to make it fit into preconceived social ideas. His stance caused him to thunder again and again against the corruption of Western civilization.

While he criticized the West, he tried to identify with the East. He listened to the advice of Indian friends on improving the Christian missionary approach. One of his friends and counselors was the famous nonviolent revolutionary leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi told him a number of things that the Christian movement should do if it wanted to become a part of the national life of India and contribute its power to India's uplift and redemption. Among Gandhi's suggestions, according to Jones, were these:

I would suggest, first, that all of you Christians, missionaries and all, must begin to live more like Jesus Christ. . . . I would suggest that you must practice your religion without adulterating or toning it down. . . . Third I would suggest that you must put your emphasis upon love, for love is the center and soul of Christianity. . . . Fourth, I would suggest that you study the non-Christian religions and culture more sympathetically in order to find the good that is in them, so that you might have a more sympathetic approach to the people.¹⁰

Jones attempted all four of these things. He tried to approach the Indian people with sympathy and understanding. He was concerned to present to them the living Christ and to let the living Christ do his work. He felt that he could trust India with Christ and trust Christ with India.

It is a mistake to think that Jones spent all of his time listening and relating to Indian culture; this was not his approach at all. He wanted to communicate the person of Jesus and what Christ could do with human life. He did listen—but he also

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 126-27.

shared. The following account of an experience with Gandhi, as recorded in *Christ at the Round Table*, demonstrates this stance:

This last year I stayed eight days with this great soul in his Ashram at Sabarmati. These wonderful eight days left deep impressions upon me; here was simplicity yoked to national service and to the service of the poor; here was a deep voluntary sharing with the underprivileged. . . .¹¹

During the days spent together Gandhi and Jones talked about religious experience. Gandhi expressed his belief that one can discover God only after a long and patient search. He told Jones, "No miracles are to be expected, and it may take ages."¹² Jones was deeply disturbed by this attitude. He realized that men need God and redemption now and that if man is to be saved a miracle *must* be performed. He describes his follow-up to this conversation with Gandhi in these words:

Was Gandhiji right or did there echo through his words that Noble Despair so characteristic of life lived apart from the Way?

As I walked home that morning something else welled up in my inmost being. I remembered that twenty-five years before, when I gave my bankrupt soul to Christ, a miracle was performed, and it did not take ages either. God has been the supreme reality in experience ever since.

I told Gandhiji of this the next day. And our eyes grew moist and our hearts warm and tender as we talked.¹³

E. Stanley Jones lived through two world wars, the revolution of India's struggle for independence, the increased secularization of both the East and the West, and the onslaughts against the Christian faith made by technology and scientism. The missionary preacher, always true to his calling, has shared warmly and enthusiastically his own experiences with Jesus Christ. As a result of his experiences he also called into question many of the social injustices and corruptions of the world in which he lived.

11. E. Stanley Jones, *Christ at the Round Table* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1928), p. 67.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

13. *Ibid.*

A variety of ingredients are blended in the life of E. Stanley Jones: a mystical relationship to God in the living Christ; a compulsion to share through personal witness his experience with Jesus; a profound impression of the social and ethical dimensions of the claims of Jesus upon human life; and a devotion to free the Christ he loves from the prisonhouse of culture.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Perhaps E. Stanley Jones should not be described as a great preacher; it might be more precise to say that he is a great missionary whose preaching is a part of his greatness. Any analysis of the preaching of Jones would have to recognize that his sermons are not really *technically* superior, at least from a homiletical point of view. Nevertheless, every message reveals the depth of his perception, the breadth of his travels, and the genius of his descriptive powers.

Jones has been most frequently criticized for the excessive emotionalism of some of his illustrative material. Perhaps this criticism is not altogether justified. No doubt his missionary experience put him in touch with more dramatic experiences than the average person is used to. Even so, it seems fair to say that some of these stories may not be handled with the best of taste. His preaching should not be underrated, however, even with these flaws. His sermons are careful, intelligent presentations of the gospel. At times the illustrations are truly superb. Much of his thinking shows keen insight and creativity.

It is true that most of the contact which Jones had with the majority of people came through his writings. His first book, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, was unusually successful. Yet much of this material was involved in his preaching, and much of his preaching became involved in these books. One such work, "The Goal of Human Living," is included in this study. It is an excellent example of the sermonic essays which compose his works. But it is also true that for many, many years no anthology of American preaching was complete without a sermon by E. Stanley Jones.

His writings attracted much attention. It would be almost impossible to list a complete secondary bibliography for Jones, since any such bibliography would have to contain several hundred listings. Perhaps that fact will suggest the impact his missionary ideas have had upon the thinking of others.

But his preaching has not received such careful attention. Yet there can be no doubt that his sermons make a profound impact upon those who hear him, although he will be remembered primarily as a missionary writer.

Because of his training as a lawyer Jones tried to preach his first sermon much as a lawyer might present a brief. He regarded this first effort as a miserable failure; but just before he left the room he stopped and gave his testimony, and a young man was converted. He later said, "As God's lawyer I was a dead failure; as God's witness I was a success. That night marked a change in my conception of the work of the Christian minister—he is to be, not God's lawyer to argue well for God; but he is to be God's witness, to tell what grace has done for an unworthy life."¹⁴ As a result, his sermons bear the marks of testimony. They flow naturally from experience to experience; they are rich with personal illustration; they are not overly involved with organization or exposition.

Jones has been criticized for his seeming lack of concern for doctrine. He denies that he is unconcerned but rather feels that all doctrine must evolve from an understanding of Christ himself:

A body of doctrine is bound to grow up around him. We cannot do without doctrine, but I am so anxious for the purity of doctrine that I want it to be held in the white light of his Person and under the constant corrective of his living Mind. . . .

We must call men not to loyalty to a belief but loyalty to a Person. . . .

But we do not get Jesus from our beliefs, we get our beliefs from Jesus.¹⁵

Apparently some ecclesiastical figures were afraid that the preaching of Jones revealed a certain doctrinal looseness which might express itself in disorganized and heretical belief in India. Jones, on the other hand, had no such fears:

If some are afraid of what might happen if we were to give India Jesus without hard-and-fast systems of thought and ecclesiastical organizations, lest the whole

14. Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, p. 20.

15. Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, pp. 171–75.

be corrupted, let our fears be allayed. Jesus is well able to take care of himself.¹⁶

His sermons show the same conviction. They focus in solitary fascination upon the form of Jesus Christ; they do not argue doctrine or even present it in didactic fashion; they narrate the acts of God in the history of Israel or in the life of Jesus and his apostles without apology or explanation. For those who would criticize such a casual doctrinal presentation, remember that Jones was a missionary. Remember also that he was speaking to men who were not interested in the subtle refinements of two thousand years of Christian doctrine. And in his missionary sermons at home, he could scarcely be expected to develop any intricate theological arguings. "We always know where Stanley Jones is coming out," said Srinavasa Shastri, one of India's greatest Hindus, "for no matter if he begins at the binomial theory, he will come out at the place of conversion."¹⁷ That singleness of vision marks all of his work.

But some critics have felt that Jones tends to interpret Scripture in a manner which fits his preconceived social ideas and that his sermons are weak in biblical authority. Jones answered by saying that he was very much concerned with the historical Jesus as revealed in the Scriptures, but that he was interested also in finding him in existing situations:

Some time ago I was criticized kindly but earnestly by a missionary in India who complained that "I preached a living Christ instead of a dead Christ." I think I knew what he meant. He felt I did not enough emphasize what Jesus did, expressed in fixed formulas and set systems, not enough of that once-and-for-all-accomplished idea. . . . But I believe in that past. . . . Yet Christ is living today. . . . I find him in places and movements I had never dreamed of and by the quiet sense of his presence he is forcing modification everywhere.¹⁸

The criticism of his illustrations has already been mentioned; these have been called "extreme in their sentimentality," and

16. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

17. Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, p. 8.

18. Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, pp. 211-12.

marked by "excessive repetition of 'pet' expressions."¹⁹ Although these criticisms are harsh, they are generally true of the total impression. Yet in reading any one of the sermons by Jones, it is doubtful whether anyone would feel that these remarks are entirely justified.

The sermons selected for inclusion are excellent examples of Christian proclamation by one of the church's best-known modern missionaries.

19. Kenneth Ralph Thompson, "The Ethics of E. Stanley Jones" (Th.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, 1960), p. 254.

Sermons

CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

Romans 10:9

THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN creed was a simple one, the most profoundly simple creed that was ever uttered. As time went on and we became secondhand in regard to this Gospel, we became more and more wordy, until the creeds of Nicaea and Athanasius are wordy compared to this. No creed has ever had so much packed into so few words—"Jesus is Lord." Paul says, "If thou wilt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord, thou shalt be saved." Of all the astonishing things ever uttered, that's the most astonishing.

A person born as a babe, an outcast apparently from the beginning, not welcomed among the elite, growing up as a child in an obscure village, working at an obscure occupation, walking out with no armies, no learning of the schools, no official backing, and announcing that he was Lord! And the amazing thing is that people believed him. And when they came in contact with him, they found something happening to them that only God could cause to happen: miracles that changed character and life; miracles in nature, human nature, turning the streams of history into new channels, taking off the gates locked against human opportunity, and setting men free.

And men believed that he was alive and was at the right hand of the throne of the universe. A people as fiercely monotheistic as the Jews, a people who could say, "Hear, O Israel. The Lord our Lord is one Lord." And then they believed that a man was Lord! That must have been a terrific wrench to their thinking. It must have set the whole of their universe in a new pattern, to believe that this man was God.

But the people believed it, and, strangely enough, when they believed it, something happened. Life was fundamentally and proudly different. The shadows crept away. Light came. In the South Sea Islands there's a monument erected to a missionary there. It says, "When he came, there was no light. When he left, there was no dark-

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ness." When this man came to our planet, there was no light except flickering torches of truth lifted up here and there, and when he left us, there was no darkness, except self-imposed darkness. Wherever he went, there was no darkness at all.

That's a stark miracle. The opening of the blind eyes, the unstopping of the deaf ears, and the making of the lame to walk and the dead to rise are marginal, half-important miracles. This—God become man—is the miracle of miracles. Believe that, and anything can happen. And strangely enough, when you believe it, something does happen—deeply, profoundly. And a man arises from that moment and says, "This is it. All else is marginal. This is it." Now notice that this creed said "Jesus," not Christ, the eternal, disembodied Christ, but Jesus, the Incarnate, the divine Word become flesh—"He is Lord." That's important.

All the cults that demand that we cultivate ourselves begin with us. We have all the answers within us. The cult of self-discovery says, "I am Lord. I have all the answers within me. Cultivate myself." They are drunk with the wine of the wordiness of their own self-assertion, but that wine dies away and leaves a vast disillusionment. We know we're not God. The cult of self-preoccupation, the secular cult, says what the Old Testament says about a city that told herself, "I am, and there is no one else." That is the cult of self-preoccupation. The result? You do not like yourself. The self-preoccupied are preoccupied with nothing but disillusionment about themselves. Concentrate yourself on yourself, and you won't like yourself, and nobody else will like you. Especially the universe—it won't back you. None of your sums will add up. You'll be against it, and up against it. The cult of materialism says that "money is Lord." The cult of the herd says, "The herd is Lord." The cult of pleasure says, "Thrills are the Lord." The cult of nationalism says, "The nation is Lord." The cult of ecclesiasticism says, "The church is Lord."

And here this simple statement walks straight down through this medley of assertions, sweeps them aside with one awful, transcendent word—"Jesus is Lord." That's the most narrow, divisive, all-claiming word that ever fell upon human ears. But the moment you try it, and make him Lord, a vast emancipation sets in. Life begins to add up to sense, not nonsense. Something holds life together in coherence and meaning, gives it drive. Sins drop away as irrelevant in the light of this mighty thing that's broken into life. Life has found its Lord, and it knows it. And that's the biggest thing that we need and must have in life.

Psychology says that there are three basic human needs: first, to belong; second, to have significance; third, to have a reasonable security. The person who doesn't belong is ill at ease. The first necessity of human nature is to say, "I belong." Therefore we fasten upon the half answers: "I belong to this, and that, and the other"—the half

answers. They gain initially a sense of belonging, but they all let us down, broken reeds. But we need to belong. And there's the fallacy of a great deal of our American thinking at the present moment. Many are saying that the first thing is personal freedom. It isn't. I heard two men in a great conference independently, one after the other, say that the first thing is to gain human freedom. No, no. The first thing is to gain a bondage, to belong. The first thing in life is to lose it. You lose it—it comes back to you again. In Romans 1:6 the phrase appears, "called to belong to Jesus Christ." You're not called to do or to be. You're called to belong. You settle the belonging, and the doing and the being settle themselves.

Who's got you? Where do you bend the knee? What do you obey supremely? Settle that, and that is a settlement that settles all things down the line. It's a cosmic settlement. Until that's settled, nothing is settled.

A woman came to one of our Ashrams and said, "All the cults began with *me*. I was to do this. I was to think this. I was to attain to this. I was to repeat this. I was to repeat that. I was to repeat the other. I was the center of my universe. I knew I wasn't the center, and I came here, and the first thing I heard you say was, 'Belong. Lose your life.' I did, and for the first time in my life, I found myself."

I don't argue. I only testify that the more I belong to Jesus, the more I belong to myself. Bound to him, I walk the earth free. Low at his feet, I stand straight before everything. When I am most his, I am most my own. Strange paradox, but a fact. And it works to the degree that it's tried, and it works everywhere, and there are no exceptions. Jesus, this incarnate Jesus, is Lord.

Why? By some divine decree? By some divine decree that takes hold of him and sets him on the throne of the universe? No, no, no. It is because he's the revelation of the very heart of the universe, in understandable terms.

The center of the Incarnation is the phrase that Paul uses, "He emptied himself." Of what? Apparently of omnipotence. He subjected himself to the forces that play upon you and me, that mold you and me, calling on no power not at your disposal or mine. He emptied himself of omnipotence, because I don't want a revelation of what God can do. It would scare me out of my wits, do me no good, overwhelm me. Nor do I want a revelation of what God knows, his omniscience. I couldn't understand it in any case. So a revelation of God's omniscience would do me no good. I'd be so overwhelmed I couldn't understand it, and I'd be confused. I don't want a revelation of God's omnipresence. I, who am located in a body, couldn't understand universal being, being everywhere. I don't want to know those things. What do I want to know? I want to know God's character. I want to know what he's like; for what he's like, I must be like. I cannot be at cross-purposes with God and not get hurt. But what's he like? How could I know, except

he show me, in understandable terms, human terms? Unless he reveal his character where my character and your character are wrought out, namely, in the stream of human history.

And I look into the face of Jesus, and I say to myself, "Is God, my Father, like that? If so, I ask nothing higher. I could be content with nothing less." If God in character is not like Jesus, I'm not interested in God. I bow my head at the shrine of the beauty of character of this man. After two thousand years, I know no higher term in any language than the term "Christlike." And when I apply it to God, I do not lower my idea of God, I heighten it. I can take every characteristic in Jesus and apply it to God, and I heighten the very idea of God.

Then he's Lord because he has revealed reality. And he's Lord because he's revealing the ultimate reality in the universe, and therefore it resides in him. No trickery, no imposition from without, but revelation from within. He has gone to the throne of the universe because he has revealed the heart of the universe, and that heart turns out to be love, a love that will not let us go, a love that opens its arms as wide as human need and can lift a man as high as the divine throne.

Jesus is Lord. Of what? Of everything. He's Lord of my past—of all the helpless things a man stands before. He says, "My God! I've done that! And what I've done, I cannot undo. Done. I can't take my hand and wipe it out. I can't." He can.

A strange thing happened to me when I fell at the feet of this man and looked into his face and said, "You're Lord." He said, "If I'm Lord, I'm Saviour, and I'm a savior from what you've been and what you've done." Now I face that past, and it's different, it belongs to a different person. Not this person, but a person that was, and is not, but is to be. And it takes the very sins of our past and makes them redemptive. I help others by talking of the redemption that came to me through those sins, and so those very sins help me.

And Jesus is Lord of the future. I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. My radio audience is going off now. We're grateful that you listened in this long. I hope you will get down on your knees where you are, and whisper to him, "Jesus is Lord." You'll get up a new man. I would continue a moment or two with this audience.

There's a solemn joy that goes down through the pages of those early Christian centuries, and the solemn joy was this, that sin and evil had met its match, the tyranny of sin and evil had been broken, men could attain to that hitherto impossible thing for the masses, goodness, and attain it at once—one day this type, another day another type. Down through those palpitating centuries went a new note of gladness: sin and evil had met their match, and men were free. And that can happen to you, and now.

Jesus *is* Lord—not will be—*is*. Not hope to be—*is*. Men were now living on a reality, and that created hope; but the hope was not a mere

hope, it was based upon an inherent reality. Something happened at the center, and cynicism dropped away. Hope began to beat within human breasts, and that wonderful thing called Christian hope was born.

I stood in the Mosque of Saint Sophia, that amazing bit of architecture once a Christian church and now a Mohammedan mosque in Istanbul, the city that was once Constantinople. All the Christian symbols had been wiped out, and Arabic lettering had been put in. As I stood there, I looked up over the altar place at the dome, and my heart stood still. I grabbed the arm of a friend. I said, "Look! He's coming back!" I could see that the daubs of the centuries were wearing off, and there was the figure of the ascending Christ, coming back again through the daubs of the centuries. "O," I said, "you can't wipe him out. He's coming back." This man overthrew empires, and everything that doesn't fit into his kingdom is doomed. Every tyranny that has come has broken itself upon the silent power of this strange, silent man. My God! What a man!

He's Lord of death. A Christian preacher was preaching in the bazaars in India, and a Mohammedan said, "Padre Sahib, we have a proof in our religion that you haven't got in yours. We can go to Mecca and find the tomb of Mohammed, but when you go to Palestine you can't be sure that you've got the tomb of Jesus." "Yes," said the Christian preacher, "you're right. We have no tomb in Christianity because we have no corpse." And that was echoed by a little boy during this Christmas time, when they were talking about Santa Claus, for he said, "O, you can have your Santa Claus, but what did Santa Claus do? He didn't leave a tomb. I'm for Jesus." He left a tomb. He came out of it.

Three days after Mahatma Gandhi had been assassinated, the radio did nothing night and day but eulogize and talk about the father of that great land, Mahatma Gandhi. Mrs. Naidu, the great poet of India, gave a broadcast on Sunday, three days after the assassination. She was a Hindu, but had been in contact with the Christians a good deal, and she broke out into this eloquence. She said, "O Bapu ['little father'], O Little Father, come back. We're orphaned without you. We're lost without you. Come back and lead us." I could sympathize with the eloquent plea of a stricken heart, representing a stricken nation, but do you know what I felt as I sat there? I thought, "O God, I'm grateful I don't have to cry that cry for the leader of my soul: 'O Jesus, come back. Come back. We're orphaned and stricken without you.'" I do not cry that cry. He has come back. It is the third day and he's alive. And wherever the heart is open, there we're released. And wherever your heart whispers, "Help," he's right there to give that help. And you can't whisper a sigh within your heart without he's right there beside you, meeting that need.

A Ph.D., a man who had all the degrees possible, I suppose, a very able psychologist, came into my room one day, and he sat down without preliminaries, no beating around the bush, but as simply as a child

he said, "I want to be saved." It was so refreshing. I've sat down with people, and they've talked for hours and hours before they get to the point, and here in one sentence he revealed his need: "I want to be saved." I didn't have to talk long. We got on our knees. I prayed my prayer, he prayed his prayer. Jesus walked straight into that stricken heart. Before he came there was no light. After he came there was no darkness. That man rose from his knees, the tears rolling down his cheeks and a light on his face never seen on land or sea, and he *was* saved. From what? Everything. The immediate power that's at the heart of the universe was right at his heart, cleansing, forgiving, releasing, saving. That's the central miracle. And that miracle, quiet, unobtrusive, can happen to you tonight. And all you have to do is to say yes, and it's done.

In India they repeat montras. A priest will whisper a montra into the ear of his disciple. The disciple doesn't know what it means, but he repeats it. It's his life charm. As you go into the new year, I'd like to whisper into your ear three words. Take it. It's a life montra. When in trouble, repeat it. When facing a dilemma, repeat it. When facing sin, repeat it. When facing disaster, repeat it. When facing temptations, repeat it: "Jesus is Lord." Take those three words and go into the tomorrow, and into the future. And there is no future. It's all present. Jesus is Lord.

RELIGION AT THE JUDGMENT BAR

Hebrews 13:8

WE have thought that religion was the judge of people, events and movements. This is true, for it sets up standards that become the standards of judgment for human society and individuals. But today religion is being judged. It is standing at the judgment bar.

Consider the situation in India—60,000,000 outcastes, under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, have announced that they are leaving Hinduism and are seeking a new spiritual home.

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The point at which they are judging the system of religion in which they have grown up is at the point of brotherhood. They feel they have been degraded under their old system and their manhood is in revolt. They are now looking at the different faiths, to find which one offers them the best way out of their degradation. They are wanting something that will change their total life. In other words, in India religion is at the judgment bar. The astonishing thing is that the outcaste is the judge. This is an entire reversal of human history. It shows the law of God in operation that if you degrade another man he becomes the instrument of God to judge you.

In Russia religion was at the judgment bar in regard to the production of a new order, but the organized system of religion could not stand that test allied to an impossible czarist regime in a decaying order. It had specialized in ornate ritual and magnificent services and it became the priest of the old instead of the prophet of the new.

At the time of the Russian revolution a conference of priests was being held at Moscow. They debated for two days whether at a certain place in the service the priest should wear a yellow robe or a white robe. Within five blocks of that debate firing was taking place in the counterrevolution. Religion was taken up with splendid trivialities while a great national crisis was on. Had religion been the prophet of the new instead of the priest of the old, Russia today might have been a religious instead of an anti-religious people. Religion was called to the judgment bar and it was not able adequately to meet that call.

Today in America religion is at the judgment bar. We are in the process of facing changes. Those changes will take place here under communism or under fascism, or under the kingdom of God on earth. We are not going to stay where we are. We are going to change and it is a question of what shall be the directing, driving forces of those changes, and what will be the goal. Can religion provide a goal adequate to meet this need and power to move on to that goal? It is obvious that much religion, as seen in the organized system today, cannot answer that demand. The vision is too limited and the dynamic too feeble. It is the judgment hour of God, and many systems are being weighed in the balance and found wanting.

But while the system of religion which we built up around Christ in the West is at the judgment bar, let us make no mistake about the matter. Christ and his kingdom are not at the judgment bar. He is the Judge, and he is judging both the system which we built up around him and the social order in western civilization at the present time. The call of the world is not to modify him, but to obey him. I have to apologize for many things in the East for myself, for my church, for my civilization, because all of these are only partially Christianized. But concerning Jesus Christ there is no apology upon my lips, for there is none in my heart. He is forcing modification upon everything; he himself stands unmodified.

When one exposes oneself to the experiment in Russia, as I did two years ago, it is a deep shock to one's inner life. Here is a civilization leaving out the one thing we hold dear—God. I needed some word of reassurance. I believe I got it while in Russia in two visions which came to me in my early morning devotions. They were these: "For we have a kingdom which cannot be shaken" and "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."

But we need something more than that program. We need a power, and Christ, the unchanging Person, is that power. We have then two things, an unshaken kingdom and an unchanging Person—a program and a power. And that Man stands confronting us, our Judge and our Savior. Depend upon it, he stands over against our civilizations and puts his finger upon its weaknesses here and there. If we respond to him we are saved. If we refuse we are doomed. This is the rock upon which civilization will be built—or else the rock upon which we will stumble and go to pieces.

Now let us come down to our own personal lives. As this Man confronts you do you feel that your life is founded on reality, on the facts that are eternal? Are you built on the sand of self-will? This Man confronts you with judgment. He breaks up your peace of mind, but with it he offers an offer of redemption, a new birth, a fresh beginning.

NOT MASTERS, BUT SERVANTS

"But be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; . . . And call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:8-11).

JESUS said, in effect: There are three attitudes of spirit that I cannot entrust you with: First, be ye not called teachers; second, be not called

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fathers; third, be not called leaders; but be ye called servants. Three attitudes I cannot trust you with, but there is a fourth attitude that I can trust you with.

First, I cannot trust you with the attitude of being a teacher because the attitude of the teacher is this—I know and you do not, now listen to me. That is the attitude of self-assertion, and that attitude cannot be Christianized. Teachers are likely to be dogmatic, are used to being obeyed, and therefore it is easy to become dogmatic and cocksure in your attitude as a teacher.

Second, I cannot trust you with the attitude of a father, for fathers are the people of experience—I have been through this and know, and you do not know, now listen to me. The attitude is: Now I have arrived at a certain position and I have a right to reverence and respect because of my years; now listen to me. I cannot trust you with that attitude, for that attitude cannot be Christianized.

Third, I cannot trust you with the attitude of a leader. Now the attitude of the leader is—I lead and you follow. I cannot trust you with that attitude, because it is an attitude of self-assertion. Now our difficulty is that in our educational institutions we are training up leaders all the time. We inoculate the idea into our young people, telling them, “You are going out to be a leader, remember that.” And when we were thinking about becoming missionaries, in the west, it was drummed into us that we were going out to be leaders, and in our young people’s societies we have what we call leaders’ meetings.

If you get a half dozen people together who have all been trained to be leaders, then you have the stage set for a lot of clashes. They say, Well, I have been trained as a leader and I am going to lead and the rest of you can follow. If everyone has been trained in that way, who is going to follow? Then you have strife, difficulty and confusion in your Christian work. This is why we have the struggle for position, place and power in the church and in the ministry, and therefore Christianity instead of providing a brotherhood has provided cliques and confusion.

A minister goes into a church and says, Now I am going to be your leader. You are to follow me. If you do not do this, then look out! This whole attitude is full of self, dressed up in the garb of religion, but still the old self.

Now Jesus said, I cannot trust you with any one of these three attitudes. The only attitude that I can trust you with is the attitude of service. Among the Gentiles the greatest lord it over the rest, but among you it shall not be so. I give you an entirely different type of kingdom. We will not build it upon the old type; in this kingdom the servant becomes the greatest of all. That man is not greatest who has the greatest number of servants, but that man is greatest who serves the largest number of people. The only greatness is greatly giving of self. The deepest principle of Christianity is this, “He that saveth his

life shall lose it, but he that loseth it shall find it again." Lose yourself for the sake of others, and lo, you will find yourself again in authority and leadership—because you did not want it, did not strive for it. You can have leadership and the position of a teacher only on the condition that you renounce it and become servants.

What is the secret of Gandhi's power over India? There are two reasons for it: India has always believed in the man, and revered the man who could renounce; the man who could turn his back upon the world and renounce everything—that man has always gripped the heart of India. The old ascetic in India never served. He centered himself on himself. But Christianity came in with a new ideal, that of greatness through service.

Now Gandhi put these two things together and became the meeting place of these two streams: he became the ascetic who served. He was willing to give up, but was willing to give up for the sake of others.

The ideal of asceticism begets the old type of mind. The ideal of service begets the new type of mind. Gandhi sums up the two types, so he appeals to both. Now because Gandhi is the servant of all he rises up in authority over the spirit of India in an amazing way. Not wanting any position of authority he rises to an authority that is far greater than that of any viceroy.

I have wondered why China has turned so tremendously toward the figure of Sun Yat-sen. A chair coolie made this explanation of it when Sun came back to Canton from his long exile, the hero of everyone when the revolution was completed: "I was in school with Dr. Sun and here I am just a chair coolie, and now he is the A number 1 in all the land. It is fate. Fate put him up there and put me down here."

But the secret is not that. The secret was that he forgot his own interests in the interests of China. All through the years he had one passion, to give himself to uplift China. And the test came when it seemed that if he stepped down from the presidency China would be united, and he was willing to step down. Now that moment of being willing to step down to unite China made him truly great. The man who is willing to renounce himself for the good of all rises up in authority over all.

It is not strange that Jesus should hold the place he holds in the world. He to the full fulfilled this principle in his death upon the cross, and he rises to power and becomes the leader of the human race because he was willing to give himself most deeply for the human race. It is no secret that religion will hold the control of the future, and that religion will hold the world which is willing to serve most and to become the servant of all.

If communism can serve people more than Christianity, then communism is going to lead. It is the survival of the spiritually fit, those who give themselves most completely to the service of others.

In the long run I believe that Christianity will win over commun-

ism. I believe that communism does want to do something for the poor and distressed, but I believe it is doing it in the wrong way. I do not believe you can create a brotherhood out of class war. I do not believe you can use force to create a human brotherhood. I believe that you must not only have a good end but a good method. Christianity will win in the long run because its end is better and its means are better. I grant that our methods seem much slower and more unwieldy than those of the communists. Theirs are more revolutionary and ours are more evolutionary, but in the end I believe the method of Jesus will win. But it will not be by chance, but because we give ourselves more completely to his power and have a better program than communism has.

You and I must recognize who is going to be the servant. I saw on the platform in India two men who had faced the Christian ministry in two different ways. One took the method of looking out for himself and seeing that he received the proper place on committees, proper recognition and authority. He knew how to pull wires and to move situations in his own behalf, and he arrived at a place high up in ecclesiastical authority. After he got there, however, he was sitting upon an empty throne. When he preached to us we could not hear anything he was saying. We would always recall those methods by which he arrived at that place; they spoke so loud we could not hear what he said.

Beside him sat Sadhu Sundar Singh. Now he had asked for no place of authority, but gave himself for the people and for Christ. And what happened in his life? He had an authority over our spirits that was tremendous. If it was known that Sundar Singh was going to preach somewhere, the whole city rushed to hear him. He had lost himself, and found himself in a place of authority.

There is plenty of room at the top, but it is only by forgetting yourself that you can arrive. You must begin at the bottom, however, and you can only arrive at the top by forgetting yourself.

How did Kagawa get his place of authority? He did not get his place because he is more brilliant than others. I sat beside him day after day at Princeton University and never dreamed that he was anything in particular. He was just a nice, polite Japanese student, but after a while I heard everyone talking Kagawa, Kagawa of Japan, and I found it was the student beside whom I had sat. The doctor told him he had only one lung and gave him about four months to live. He determined to give himself to the poor, the drunkards, thieves and outcasts of Japan. He thought for them, he lived for them, gave himself to them, and before long what was happening? They were turning to him as their only salvation, guide and friend, and he became the labor leader of Japan and wrote the book, *Beyond the Death Line*, the story of his own life—for he did not die at the end of the four months, never thought about it, was too busy to die so decided to live!

He was so entangled with other people's needs that he could not disentangle himself, so he decided to live. This book tells how he was living on beyond the death line. More copies of that book were sold than of any other book in Japan. Everybody wanted to read about the man who forgot himself.

Lord Shaftesbury was one of the greatest men England ever produced. He was very brilliant, was going straight into Parliament. But he one day looked into the faces of the poor on the streets of London, and that sight haunted him. One night he lay tossing on his bed, trying to decide which way his life should go. Would he go on into Parliament, or would he give himself to the poor? All night he lay there, and one by one he pulled up by the roots the darling ambitions of his heart and flung them out. In the morning he belonged to the poor. He refused his career in Parliament and gave himself to the poor. He thought for them, gave himself to them. He gained their confidence, and they turned to him as their leader and friend. They had a thieves' conference one day, and no one could enter unless he was a thief. Everyone was examined very carefully to find out if he was a real thief or not. In our day it might be a little difficult to decide! When they were sure everyone was a thief, they closed and locked the door, and sent for Lord Shaftesbury.

They told him why they were thieves, of the terrible economic condition, and how impossible it was for them to earn a livelihood. Did he send for the police and have them all arrested? No, he understood their needs, and put a policeman into their own hearts. He said, if you will follow me I will help you back into a decent life, and hundreds and thousands of these men were reclaimed through his influence.

When Shaftesbury died, all England turned out to do him honor. I suppose no king ever had such a funeral as he had. When the procession moved up the street it was lined by hundreds of thousands of people. Behind the hearse representing a vast crowd were those carrying a banner with these words: "We were hungry and you fed us"; behind them another banner, "We were in prison and you came unto us"; and another group, "We were strangers and you took us in"; and another group, "We were sick and you visited us." All men turned out to do honor to the man who forgot himself—the servant of all became the greatest of all.

There are two ways open before us. We can take it *for* ourselves, or we can take it *on* ourselves. This brings us to the very crux of the whole problem. If you are going to become the servant of all and take it on yourself, then that means self-renunciation. It means you must say, Yes, I surrender that ultimate, that last thing—myself. Then you say, I own nothing, not even myself. Then Christ can take hold of your life. Then he can use you. Which way shall I take? Will you let go that ultimate thing? It will mean that you will do like Lord Shaftesbury,

